

Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras, Hymns & Prayers

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

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English Exposition by:--

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DEDICATION

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED LORD RAM

I dedicate this Book to Lord Sri Ram who is my dearest of dear, most beloved, the essence of my life and being, and for whom, and for whose pleasure, and on whose behest, and on whose divine mission, this book is dedicated.

Nothing that I write is of my own creation. It is the Lord who is getting it done. So I deserve no credit. However, being an ordinary man like the rest of us, I may have committed errors, and for those I beg forgiveness. I hope this book will help to continue the great tradition of singing the glories of the different aspects of same indivisible one Divinity in order to meet diverse needs of the Soul, the Spirit, one such being to find peace and happiness amidst the surrounding turmoil of the world by being able to spend some time in the thoughts of the Divine Being, the same 'Parmatma', the same Lord known by different names in different tongues.

No creature is perfect; it's foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or one butterfly—he went on endlessly evolving and designing newer forms. So, I have done my best, I have poured out my being in these books. Honestly, I am totally incompetent—it was the Lord who had done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were merely an instrument in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be 'his very own' is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions on my part that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope my readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

I submit this effort at the holy feet of my beloved Lord Ram, and surely also to Lord Hanuman who was very dear to the Lord and an incarnation of Lord Shiva himself, with this humble little prayer that comes to my lips: 'Lord God; Glorious and Blessed be Thy Name. I yield Thee my most hearty thanks and reverential gratitude that Thou hast given me the honour and the privilege and the opportunity to serve Thee and fulfil Thy desire to spread Thine Good Word for the good and welfare of the human kind through the Books Thou hast got written through these humble hands of mine. And for that mercy and graciousness of Thee, I shall ever and for ever remain Thine grateful and thankful and obliged.'

I hope the reader will find my book useful and interesting. Since English is an international language, this book will help the English speaking world to access this masterpiece of classical Indian scriptural text.

"He leadeth me! O blessed tho't!
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!
What-e'er I do, wher-e'er I be,
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me!" [A Hymn]

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia
Author

Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras, Hymns & Prayers

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
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PREFACE

This Holy Book “Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras, Hymns & Prayers” presents a wonderful and comprehensive collection of a number of devotional and sacred Mantras, Hymns, Stotras and Prayers dedicated to Lord Ram who was a manifestation of Supreme Being and the Lord God of the world. It also underlines the glory and holiness of the Lord's sacred Name which acts as a spiritual remedy that grants eternal peace and happiness to the soul of a creature.

These Mantras, Hymns, Stotras etc. have been selected from a wide range of sources as would be evident by a perusal of the Contents part of this book. They have been arranged in separate Chapters, a brief summary of which is given below. The full original Text of all the Mantras, Hymns, Stotras etc. with their Roman Transliteration is given, and this is followed by their renderings in simple English accompanied by notes to elaborate upon the text which makes this Book unique and extremely useful for the reader.

Chapter 1: This Chapter deals with the glory and holiness of the sacred Name of Lord Ram as it is described by the great saint-poet Goswami Tulsidas in his works, viz. the epic (i) Ram Charit Manas, (ii) Dohawali, (iii) Barvai Ramayan, (iv) Kavitawali Ramayan, (v) Geetawali Ramayan, and (vi) Vinai Patrika.

Chapter 2: This Chapter has Lord Ram's 108 Divine Names as they appear in two ancient excellent classics, viz. ‘Anand Ramayan’ and ‘Padma Puran’. At the end of this Chapter the significance of the number ‘108’ has been explained.

Chapter 3: This Chapter has nine wonderful Hymns of Lord Ram from the famous devotional epic known as ‘Ram Charit Manas’ that was written by Goswami Tulsidas.

Chapter 4: In this Chapter we shall read sixteen excellent Stotras dedicated to Lord Ram from the classical narration of the glorious story of the Lord in ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ penned by the legendary sage Veda Vyas.

Chapter 5: Continuing with the theme of ‘Stotras’ of the previous Chapter, here we shall read five other wonderful Stotras dedicated to Lord Ram, viz. Ram Stavaraj Stotra, Ram Ashtak Stotra, Raghunaath Ashtak Stotra, Sita Ram Ashtak Stotra, and Ram Raksha Stotra.

Chapter 6: Then we come to Lord Ram's Mantras appearing in the ‘Upanishads’. In this Chapter, we shall read them from four relevant Upanishads, viz. Ram Uttar

Tapini Upanishad, Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Ram Rahasya Upanishad, and Kali Santaran Upanishad.

Chapter 7: In this final Chapter we shall be reading a collection of twenty-eight most wonderful and excellent devotional Prayers from Tulsidas' famous book titled 'Vinai Patrika' which is an unparalleled Book of matchless beauty and literary finesse as far as devotional hymns and prayers offered to Lord God are concerned that has ever been written in India, and perhaps also anywhere else in this world. These prayers resonate in the heart of the devotee just like the wonderful prayers in the Book of Psalms in the Holy Bible.

After finishing my book on the Upanishads dedicated to Lord Ram, as well as the English renderings of three versions of the story of the Ramayan, viz. 'Adhyatma Ramayan' and 'Devi Puran Ramayan' by sage Veda Vyas, and 'Adbhut Ramayan' by sage Valmiki, and also English versions of all the books of Goswami Tulsidas, such as Kavitawali, Geetawali, Dohawali, Barvai Ramayan, Janki Mangal, Parvati Mangal, Vairagya Sandipani, all of which have been published already, it was my wish to bring under one cover as many sacred Hymns, Stotras, Mantras and Prayers dedicated to Lord Ram along with the sacred texts that highlight the glory of the Lord's Holy Name as I possibly could. This Book is a fruit of this endeavour, and it is at the same time an offering at the holy feet of Lord Ram, the 'Lord-of-my-heart'.

I hope it would be of great help and use for devotees of Lord Ram as well as a reader who may be interested in reading, learning and being informed about the different Hymns of Lord Ram that are not usually available easily at one place in a consolidated format as their sources are scattered over a wide swathe of scriptures and other forms of ancient devotional literature.

I dedicate this Book to my most beloved Lord Ram, and as a thanksgiving I just humbly bow my head before 'him', close my eyes with tears welling up in them, with the throat too choked and overwhelmed to say a word that, even if I managed to utter, would only appear superficial and make a fool of me as it would be totally inadequate to express my sense of gratitude and thankfulness towards my Lord. And if any reader is similarly inspired and begins to love the Lord God who is so loving and merciful, if a spark of devotion is ignited in his or her heart, if their hearts feel joyous and thrilled and blessed, I would think my efforts in writing this book have been fruitful. Prayers and Hymns that come from the heart are really like the nectar that gives bliss and beatitude to the soul.

I wish to express my thanks to Sri Somil Bharti, B.Tech (IIT, Kanpur) and MBA (IIM, Calcutta) for being kind to do the Roman Transliteration of the verse for me. God bless him.

Amen!

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Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras, Hymns & Prayers

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Chapter 1

The Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name Based on Goswami Tulsidas Books:

(1.1) Ram Charit Manas:

The 'Ram Charit Manas' is a famous book of Goswami Tulsidas that narrates the divine story of Lord Ram in a most captivating and beautiful manner that directly appeals to the heart. Its uniqueness lies in the beauty of its poetry as well as in its devotional quotient that no other rendering of this holy story of Lord Ram has.

The Glory and Divinity of Lord Ram's Holy Name and its spiritual significance and value for the devotee have been described in this book in an excellent manner. Now, let us read what it says:-

चौ०. बंदउँ नाम राम रघुबर को । हेतु कृसानु भानु हिमकर को ॥ १ ॥

बिधि हरि हरमय बेद प्रान सो । अगुन अनूपम गुन निधान सो ॥ २ ॥

caupāṭi.

banda'um̐ nāma rāma raghubara kō. hētu kṛsānu bhānu himakara kō. 1.

bidhi hari haramaya bēda prāna sō. aguna anūpama guna nidhāna sō. 2.

I pay my respects to Lord Ram's Holy Name 'RAM' of Lord Raghubar¹. This name has three letters 'Ra+Aa+Ma' (ra+ā+ma). These letters respectively represent the three great Gods, viz. (i) the 1st letter 'Ra' stands for the Fire-God, (ii) the 2nd letter 'A' stands for the Sun God, and (iii) the 3rd letter 'Ma' stands for the Moon God².

[The holy Name of the Lord is pronounced as 'Rāma' or 'Raam'. It consists of three basic sounds: 'Ra' as in the English word 'run', 'Aa' as in the English word 'father', and 'Ma' as in the English word 'mum', 'rum'.] (1)

The holy Name of Lord Ram represents the three Gods of the Trinity, viz. Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer and protector) and Shiva (the concluder of creation) respectively.

It is the essence of the Vedas (i.e. it is literally the breath or the vital life of the Vedas—“*bēda prāna*”)³. It is without qualifications; it is peerless and an eternal source or fount of all auspiciousness and good virtues⁴. (2)

[¹The word ‘Raghubara’ literally means the ‘Great Lord who is the best in the line of kings descending from the ancient king named Raghu who ruled over the kingdom of Ayodhya in some ancient time’.

From the spiritual perspective this name means ‘the Lord of the creatures’, where the 1st part of the name, i.e. ‘Raghu’ stands for a living being, and the 2nd part, i.e. ‘Bara’ stands for the Lord or a husband.

So this verse essentially means ‘I pray to and offer my respects to the holy Name of Lord Ram who is the Lord of all living beings’.

²The three letters of Lord Ram’s holy Name, viz. ‘Ra+Aa+Ma’ (*ra+ā+ma*), represent the basic cosmic energy incorporated in the ‘fire element’ that is at the base of all life in this creation as represented by the ‘sun’ and the ‘moon’, i.e. the one that shines directly (i.e. the sun), and the one that is made to shine by the first (i.e. the moon). In this metaphor, the ‘fire’ stands for the cosmic Consciousness, the ‘sun’ for the Supreme Being, and the ‘moon’ for the individual Creature as the latter basks in the glory of the former. Refer: Maharamayan, 52/62-64.

To wit, just like the fire is able to burn all impurities and make gold pure, invocation of Lord Ram’s holy Name purifies the creature completely and makes his heart holy and pure. Again, just as the sun provides energy and life to all the creatures on earth and removes all darkness and the fear of ghosts by its mere presence in the sky, the holy Name of Lord Ram removes all darkness of delusions and ignorance that cloud the soul of a creature, thereby freeing him and granting him fearlessness from the horrors of birth and death in this mundane world of transmigration. And finally, just as the moon provides a soothing balm of its rays to the world scorched by the heat of the blazing sun, the Lord’s holy Name gives solace and succour and hope to the tormented soul of all creatures.

The different sounds of the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet stand for one or more Gods of the Hindu pantheon. A letter that relates to a particular God is called that God’s Beej Mantra, or a letter which acts like a secret formula that directly refers to the chosen God and encrypts his cosmic energy and mystical powers. When a worshipper wishes to seek help from a particular God, he would use a Beej Mantra specific to that God. By invoking a Beej Mantra the worshipper virtually invokes a God’s cosmic powers and energy for fulfillment of his desire. Repetition of a Beej Mantra builds up the energy that corresponds to the respective God, and it gathers more and more dynamism as time passes.

If more than one Beej Mantras are used then the worshipper is able to harness the combined energy of all the Gods to whom these Beej Mantras belong. It is like the case of employing more than one source of energy or power when a single source falls short of requirements. It’s like putting more than one electric motor into place to run a machine when any single motor falls short of the required horse-power that is needed. The combined cosmic energy of all these Beej Mantras and their respective Gods is thus focused on a single mission, and obviously the result would be more profound and the effect more stronger than using a single Beej Mantra—because this method puts the combined cosmic energy of more than one God into fulfillment of one mission.

In the case of Lord Ram, the three letters 'Ra, Aa and Ma' of the Lord's holy Name combine the energy of the Fire God, the Sun God and the Moon God.

Further, it also combines the powers of the three great Gods of the Trinity, viz. Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder of creation. To wit, the holy Name of Lord Ram symbolizes the entire gamut of creation—its beginning, its development and expansion, and its conclusion. It infuses life (Brahma), it protects and sustains (Vishnu), and it provides liberation from the miseries and torments of life (Shiva).

³Refer: Tulsidas' book Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 74 which also says the same thing in its line nos. 1-2.

⁴This verse clarifies that the Name which is being glorified is not simply a name of a great king, but it is a holy Name that has been endorsed by the Vedas, the most sacred of religious texts. The three letters of Lord Ram's holy Name combine and roll into one the cosmic powers and the authority of the three supreme forces of creation, viz. the creator Brahma, the sustainer Vishnu and the concluder Shiva. The holy Name 'Ram' represents the entire spectrum of creation—its beginning, its expansion and its conclusion. And therefore it stands for 'Brahm', the Supreme Being who represents the cosmic Consciousness.

The holy Name of Lord Ram is equivalent to the divine Mantra 'OM' that is universally regarded as the most sacred of all Mantras and is directly related to the cosmic Consciousness as it is the sound manifestation of the latter and stands for Brahm, the Supreme Being. This fundamental metaphysical fact has been elaborately detailed in Ram Uttar and Purva Tapini Upanishads that belongs to the Atharva Veda tradition. OM and RAM are synonymous with each other. A full English version of this Upanishad has already been published by this author.

Calling Lord Ram's holy Name as being the 'essence of the Vedas' it is meant that just like a body is useless without life in it, the scriptures would lose their greatness and holiness, their importance and value, if Lord Ram's holy Name is removed from them.

An important question arises here. The Supreme Being or the Lord of the Word has countless names. He is known by different names in different religions and faiths; all these names refer to the same Divinity. Then why is that Lord Ram's name 'Ram' or 'Rāma' or 'Raam' is regarded as the best and the most holy among them all? It is like a case of it being 'the first among equals'. It is said in Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, 254/22 that 'Lord Ram is the one who resides in the heart of all living beings, and his name is the one that directly appeals to the heart which finds joy in remembering it. So therefore, though there are thousands of names of the Supreme Lord, the name 'Ram' is the best amongst them all.'

There is another aspect to it. All the Mantras or divine formulas that have been prescribed in the Vedas and other scriptures are specific to particular Gods to whom they belong, and when these Mantras are used for spiritual purposes, only the spiritual energy of their respective God or deity is invoked. But in the case of Lord Ram when his holy Name is remembered or invoked then the benefits that accrue encompass the entire spectrum of cosmic forces, i.e. the forces of creation, of sustenance and of conclusion. Nothing is left out, and so obviously the powers and authority that this holy Name grants to the person who invokes it are all-encompassing and wholesome

in their nature. The benefits of Lord Ram's holy Name are all-round and comprehensive.

Like the pure 'cosmic Consciousness' that is self-illuminated and does not require any other source to provide light to it, the holy Name of Lord Ram is also self-illuminated and self-empowered.]

महामंत्र जोड़ जपत महेसू । कासीं मुक्ति हेतु उपदेसू ॥ ३ ॥

महिमा जासु जान गनराऊ । प्रथम पूजित नाम प्रभाऊ ॥ ४ ॥

mahāmantra jō'i japata mahēsū. kāsīm mukuti hētu upadēsū. 3.

mahimā jāsu jāna ganarā'ū. prathama pūji'ata nāma prabhā'ū. 4.

Lord Shiva repeats (chants) this 'Great Mantra'¹ of Lord Ram, and utters them in the right ears of a dying man at Kashi (Varanasi) to give him emancipation and salvation². (3)

Lord Ganesh knows about the stupendous glory, the mystical powers and the supremacy of Lord Ram's holy Name over all other Mantras of all other Gods, and it is for this reason that he (Ganesh) is worshipped first in all religious ceremonies and is deemed to be the senior-most God³. (4)

[¹A Mantra is a syllable, a letter, a word or a phrase that is used as a spiritual formula. In this case it is the holy Name of Lord Ram, viz. 'RAM' or 'Rāma' or 'Raam'.

²This fact has been endorsed in Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition. This Upanishad clearly states that Lord Ram's holy Name 'RAM' is called the "Tarak Mantra", which is a spiritual formula that can grant freedom, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the soul of the creature by liberating him from the cycle of transmigration and helping him to go across over this vast ocean represented by this mundane world of birth and death.

Refer also to: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 46; (ii) Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108; (iii) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 119; Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 10; (b) Barvai Ramayan, verse no. 53; (c) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 74; (d) Vinai Patrika, (i) stanza no. 11, verse no. 152; (ii) stanza no. 3, verse no. 218; (e) Shiva Samhita, 2/14; (f) Anand Ramayan, Yatra Kand, Canto 2.

³There are two stories narrated in the Purans (ancient mythological histories of the Hindus) that describe how Ganesh invoked Lord Ram's name to attain supremacy amongst all the Gods. The first version is in Shiva Puran (Shaiva Tantra), and the other is in Padma Puran.

The first story is as follows: Once there was a quarrel between Ganesh and his elder brother Kartikeya as to who should be regarded as senior. Lord Shiva sent them to Brahma, the creator, to decide the contentious matter. Another version says that once Brahma asked all the Gods who was to be deemed as being senior amongst them all and therefore eligible to be worshipped first during religious ceremonies. Each God said that it is him. So, in order to settle this dispute Brahma asked them (Ganesh and Kartikeya in the first version, and the Gods in the second version) to go around

the universe and come back to him. The one who comes back first will win the trophy as well as the honour to be called the senior-most God and the right to be worshipped first. Kartikeya jumped on his peacock and so did all the other Gods who mounted their respective vehicles as they started out on their journey around the universe. Ganesh was confounded as he had a pot-belly and a mouse as his vehicle—so it was impossible for him to win the race. Though he embarked on the journey, he felt hopeless and dejected. Somewhere sage Narad met him, and he told Ganesh that the entire creation is a manifestation of Lord Ram, the Supreme Being, and therefore there is nothing that exists beyond the Lord's holy Name. Hence, the best recourse for him, Narad advised, would be to write the name of Lord Ram on the ground and go around it in a symbolic gesture of going around the entire spectrum of creation consisting of countless universes. After doing it, Ganesh should go to Brahma and narrate the entire episode to him. Meanwhile, wherever the other Gods, including Kartikeya, went, they found the foot-prints of a mouse ahead of them, indicating that Ganesh was ahead of them in the race around the many universes! When they finally came back to Brahma they found Ganesh already there. Brahma declared him the winner and explained the reason for his decision to all the Gods—that Ganesh was the wisest amongst them all as he had circumambulated the entire creation by going around the holy Name of Lord Ram, and so he is the winner.

A variation of this is found in Padma Puran, Srishti Kand where sage Vyas narrated an event in this connection to Sanjaya. Though this story is not related to the glory of Lord Ram's name, yet let us read it for the sake of interest. It says that when the two brothers Kartikeya and Ganesh were born to Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva, all the Gods offered some wonderful rounded balls of sweets known as 'Modak' to her as a gift. These balls of sweet were made from Amrit, the juice of eternity and immortality. The two brothers quarreled to eat these sweet balls. Parvati explained that this was no ordinary sweet as it was made from Amrit, and therefore only he who was qualified to have it would get it. She said, "Look, only someone who is extremely wise, and has purified himself by doing exemplary meritorious deeds—only he is eligible to partake of this sweet." Hearing it, Kartikeya mounted his vehicle, the peacock, and went on a pilgrimage to all the holy places. But Ganesh had a fat belly and a mouse as his mount, which made it impossible for him to go anywhere. So he went around his parents, father Lord Shiva and mother Parvati, and sat down. When Kartikeya returned, panting and huffing because he was in a hurry to reach ahead of Ganesh, he found his younger brother seated comfortably. Then Lord Shiva and Parvati declared Ganesh as the winner and one who was eligible for the sweet made from Amrit. They explained that one's parents are the most honourable beings for any living being. Paying respect to one's parents is equivalent to thousands of meritorious deeds combined into one. So Ganesh would henceforth be the first to be worshipped in all religious ceremonies.]

जान आदिकबि नाम प्रतापू । भयउ सुद्ध करि उलटा जापू ॥ ५ ॥

सहस नाम सम सुनि सिव बानी । जपि जेई पिय संग भवानी ॥ ६ ॥

jāna ādikabi nāma pratāpū. bhaya'u sud'dha kari ulaṭā jāpū. 5.

sahasa nāma sama suni siva bānī. japi jē'īm piya saṅga bhavānī. 6.

The ancient poet (Valmiki) knows the great effect and the magical powers of the Holy Name of Lord Ram because he attained purity and greatness by chanting this Name in the reverse order¹. (5)

On hearing from Lord Shiva that Ram's Name is equivalent to thousands of Names of other Gods and Goddesses, Bhavani (Lord Shiva's consort) decided to chant this Holy Name alongside Lord Shiva². [To wit, when Shiva's consort became aware of the glories of Lord Ram's holy Name, she used it as a spiritual formula herself just like her husband Lord Shiva had always been doing.] (6)

[¹Refer: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 3; and (ii) Sortha/Doha no. 14 (d); (b) Vinai Patrika, (i) verse no. 151, stanza no. 7; (ii) verse no. 156, stanza no. 2; (ii) verse no. 156, stanza no. 2.

In Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 64 and 80, Valmiki himself says: “Oh Lord Ram, I have attained the exalted state of being a sage equivalent in stature to celestial sages because of your holy Name. Say then, who can ever sufficiently praise the greatness of your holy Name?”; “The celestial sages known as Sapta-rishis had advised me to repeat your holy Name in the reverse order as MARA instead of in the right order as RAMA because I told them I wouldn't be able to do it in the correct way due to my overriding sins. And inspite of this reverse way of chanting your glorious name, I still found exaltedness and enlightenment.”

Sage Valmiki was a sage who lived during the time of Lord Ram. The Lord had visited his hermitage during his journey into the forest.

The story of Valmiki is as follows: Sage Valmiki is well known for his classical work known as the famous epic ‘Ramayana’, which is his magnum opus. He is also credited with penning Advhut Ramayan in which Sita had assumed the form of Maha Kali to kill the Ravana with a thousand heads.

Valmiki is said to be the son of sage Pracheta who is said to be the son of Varun, the Water God. He is also said to be one of the Prajaapatis—the ancient patriarchs of this world.

Before he became famous as ‘Valmiki’, he was known by the name of Ratnakar. In his early life he had been in the company of Bhils, ancient tribals, from his childhood days, and married into this race. So he adopted their life and means of livelihood, which was hunting. He used to waylaid travellers and rob them to sustain his family. Once the celestial sages known as Sapta-rishis met him and told him that no one would share his sins. The meeting of these sages was a turning point in Valmiki's life. He pleaded with them to tell him how to get over his path of sins and somehow find deliverance. The sages then advised him to meditate upon the holy Name of Lord Ram as it is the easiest way for him for it requires no knowledge of scriptures and needs no formalities, and at the same time it is easy and convenient for him to repeat it as a Mantra. Valmiki accepted this advice, and immediately sat down in a motionless state of Samadhi, focusing his mind on the holy Mantra ‘RAM’. This alone led him to his enlightenment and self-realisation.

According to Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 57-58 he was a Brahmin by birth but became a cruel robber who would even kill his victims if they failed to give all their possessions to him. He had adopted this means of livelihood because he was brought up by a band of robbers and highway vagabonds who would way lay travellers and rob them. Once the seven celestial sages known as the Sapta-Rishis went through the forest where he lived, and Valmiki accosted them. When asked by the sages why he robbed others, Valmiki replied that he did it to feed his family and other dependants. The sages advised him that they would not share the

consequences of sins that he is committing for them. To test the correctness of this advice, Valmiki tied them to a tree and went to his house to ask his kith and kin if they would share any misfortune that might befall upon him. When they replied that they are only concerned with what loot he brings home, Valmiki's eyes of wisdom opened instantaneously. He rushed back to the sages, untied them and fell at their feet seeking forgiveness. He asked them to show him the path by which he can seek redemption and salvation for himself. The sages then advised him to do Japa (repetition) with Lord Ram's holy Name 'RAAM'. Valmiki said that he was so sinful that it is not possible for him to utter the Lord's holy Name. At this, the sages thought over the matter and told him to repeat the name in the reverse order—as 'MARAA'. When this word MARAA is repeated it becomes RAAM. This trick worked fine for Valmiki, and he immediately sat down to do Tapa (severe form of penance) and meditated on the name of the Lord in the reverse order. He became so immobile and lost in contemplation that a mound of anthill formed around his body. It so happened that when the sages returned to the same place during their return journey, they saw him in this condition. They poured consecrated water on him and revived him. It was then that they gave him a new name 'Valmiki', which means 'one who has emerged from an anthill'. This story is narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, 6/57-58.

He established a hermitage on the banks of river Tamsa and lived there. Lord Ram went to meet him during his outward journey to the forest, and it was in the sage's hermitage that Sita lived and her two sons Lav and Kush were born when she was sent to exile by Ram during the final days of the Lord's days on earth as a prelude to his winding up his worldly 'Leela' or deeds and ascending to the heaven as Lord Vishnu.

One day Valmiki saw a hunter shoot down a male bird and heard the wailings of his companion, the female bird. He cursed the hunter in a verse that came out of his mouth in a poetic style called the Anushtup Chand (metre). Never before had Valmiki ever composed any verse, so he was astonished at this development. Then Brahma the creator appeared before him and ordered him to compose the epic Ramayan for which the basic story was provided to him by sage Narad.

The genesis of the story of Ramayan is this—Once the celestial sage Narad came to his hermitage (called an Ashram) on the behest of Brahma. Valmiki asked him if there was anyone living in this creation who embodied all the 16 Kalaas (qualities) that the Supreme Being is known to possess. Then Narad told him about Lord Ram. This is how the grand and magnificent story of the Ramayan was revealed.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 10 which clearly endorses this fact. Refer also to Vinai Patrika, verse no. 247, stanza no. 2.

This story is narrated in Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, Canto 254, verse nos. 11-24. Briefly it is as follows: Parvati, the divine consort of Lord Shiva, had been initiated and given Lord Vishnu's Mantra by her Guru (preceptor) sage Vamdeo. Once Lord Shiva sat down for his meals and invited Parvati to join him. Parvati replied that she was worshipping Lord Vishnu by using his thousand names, known as Vishnu Sahastra Naam, which takes a long time to complete. It was then that Lord Shiva advised her that she must understand that Lord Ram's single name 'Ram' (pronounced as 'Rāma' or 'Raam') was equivalent to the thousands of names of Vishnu, or for that matter any God. Parvati accepted Shiva's advice as she knew that he was the wisest and the most enlightened amongst the Gods. Since that time Parvati

always accompanied Lord Shiva in repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram and used it as her spiritual formula.]

हरषे हेतु हेरि हर ही को । किय भूषन तिय भूषन ती को ॥ ७ ॥
नाम प्रभाउ जान सिव नीको । कालकूट फलु दीन्ह अमी को ॥ ८ ॥

haraṣē hētu hēri hara hī kō. kiya bhūṣana tiya bhūṣana tī kō. 7.
nāma prabhā'u jāna siva nīkō. kālakūṭa phalu dīnha amī kō. 8.

Lord Shiva was so happy at her decision (of chanting Lord Ram's holy Name and accepting it as her spiritual Mantra) that he made her the jewel among womenfolk as well as an inseparable part of his own self. (7)

Lord Shiva knows the great effect and the spiritual potency of the holy Name (of Lord Ram)¹ by the virtue (or the strength) of which the poison he drank became nectar for him². (8)

[¹Lord Shiva knows the mystical powers and spiritual value of Lord Ram's holy Name. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 25 which says that after studying all the scriptures and analyzing the countless ways they have been interpreted, Lord Shiva deduced that Lord Ram's holy Name is the best Mantra and the best spiritual formula for a living being. So he adopted it as his preferred Mantra which he invoked during meditation. This invocation granted him eternal peace and bliss, and elevated him to the pedestal of being a Great God, the 'Maha-Deva'.

²This story is narrated in Srimad Bhagvat Mahapurāṇ, Skandha 8, Canto 5-7. In brief it is this: The Gods and the Demons decided to churn the ocean to produce Amrit, the liquid that would grant them eternity. But this was not a joke, for the ocean was extremely sour and bitter. During the fierce churning of the ocean, for which the celestial serpent was made a rope, Mt. Mandrachal the churning rod, and the Tortoise as the base on which this mighty mountain was rested, one of the first things that was produced was 'Halahal Poison', i.e. a poison that was so acidic, scalding, corroding and dangerous that if even one drop of it fell on the earth, all life on its surface would vanish. All were terrified, not knowing how to tackle it. All the Gods rushed to Lord Shiva as they knew he was the wisest amongst them all and would certainly know what to do with this poison. Besides this, Shiva is also the God of death, so he would find a way around this problem. So Shiva uttered the holy Name of Lord Ram and sipped the poison. The name of Lord Ram is so powerful that it neutralized the negative effects of the poison so much so that it didn't affect Shiva; only Shiva's neck turned blue due to this poison. Since that time Shiva came to be known as Neel-Kantha, the Lord with a blue-tinged throat.

This drinking of the poison by Shiva and his surviving due to the powerful antidote effects of Lord Ram's holy Name has also been mentioned in Tulsidas' books (i) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, stanza no. 1 of verse no. 158; and (ii) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 156, stanza no. 2.]

दो०. बरषा रितु रघुपति भगति तुलसी सालि सुदास ।
राम नाम बर बरन जुग सावन भादव मास ॥ १९ ॥

dōhā.

baraṣā ritu raghupati bhagati tulasī sāli sudāsa.
rāma nāma bara barana jugā sāvana bhādava māsā. 19.

Tulsidas says that devotion to Lord Ram's and his holy Name is like the rainy season, and devotees are like the paddy crop. The two syllables of the holy Name, i.e. 'Ra' and 'Ma', stand for the two months of Shravan and Bhadav which are very auspicious for the growth of paddy. (Doha no. 19)

[Refer: Vinai Patrika, verse no. 221, stanza no. 4 also where a similar idea is expressed. Refer also to Kavita-wali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 78, line nos. 3-4 where Tulsidas says that he has only Lord Ram's name as his sole source of succour and solace, and he relies on it exclusively.

Paddy grows wonderfully during the two months of the rainy season known as Shravan and Bhadav in India. It is because during these two months rainfall is abundant, and it usually falls regularly, for prolonged periods of time and in a controlled manner such as in a drizzle or a light shower so as to properly water the fields. A heavy downpour is useless as the water runs off quickly, leaving the land dry and useless for the paddy crop to grow because it needs a wet soil and an abundance of water on the ground.

In this verse, Tulsidas compares a devotee to the paddy crop, and the two letters of Lord Ram's holy Name, viz. Ra and Ma, as the two months of the rainy season. Just like the paddy crop that finds an infusion of life during these two months of the rainy season, a devotee also finds extreme joy and happiness in the name of Lord Ram; a devotee feels energised and spiritually blessed when he invokes the holy Name of Lord Ram that injects freshness and cheer into his life.]

चौ०. आखर मधुर मनोहर दोऊ । बरन बिलोचन जन जिय जोऊ ॥ १ ॥
सुमिरत सुलभ सुखद सब काहू । लोक लाहु परलोक निबाहू ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

ākhara madhura manōhara dō'ū. barana bilōcana jana jiya jō'ū. 1.
sumirata sulabha sukhada saba kāhū. lōka lāhu paralōka nibāhū. 2.

Both the letters (Raa and Ma) of Lord Ram's name are sweet and charming, and they are virtually like being the 'eyes' and the 'pran' (i.e. the soul and the essence) of all the letters of the alphabet, and at the same time they are the very life of all devotees¹.

(1)

These two letters of the holy Name of the Lord are easy to remember, and they delight one and all. [To wit, whereas other Mantras are complicated and oftentimes difficult to remember and pronounce, the holy Name of Lord Ram consisting of the two letters 'Raa' and 'Ma' are very easy to recall and as easy to remember by even the most humble of persons. No special skills or knowledge of the language is

required to say the holy Name of the Lord. Hence this divine Mantra is easily accessible to one and all. They are so sweet and pleasant to say and hear that they delight both the speaker as well as the hearer.]

These two letters that form the holy Name of Lord Ram (i.e. Raa and Ma) possess mystical powers and they are so glorious and spiritually empowered that they not only take care of the creature while he lives in this gross mundane world but also ensures his well-being after this world (i.e. after his death, by providing him with deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, and taking care of his salvation and emancipation of his soul). (2)

[¹In Doha no. 19 herein above we have read that the two letters of Lord Ram's holy Name are like the two months of the rainy season that are virtually the vital life-giving months for the paddy crop, because if the rains fail the paddy would die. These present verses are an elaboration of this idea.

The letters of the alphabet are nothing but sounds made by the tongue, or a mark of ink made on paper when written. They acquire meaning and life only when one makes some sense out of them. These seemingly ordinary letters of the alphabet, which ordinarily are practical devices for general communication in day-to-day life, assume great mystical powers, and acquire dynamism and spiritual energy when they are used as Mantras (spiritual formulas), prayers or hymns dedicated to God.

So here poet Tulsidas means that if one were to closely examine and analyse the underlying philosophy of this phenomenon, then one would come to the conclusion that the sound produced by the two letters of the holy Name of Lord Ram is the cosmic energy that subtly infuses dynamism and life into all the letters of the alphabet just like the case of the invisible life-giving breath that silently breathes life and dynamism into the body of all living beings. Sans this cosmic energy injected by the sound of the holy Name of Lord Ram, the letters of the alphabet would simply be lifeless entities marked on a piece of paper, or incomprehensible and un-intelligible words uttered by the tongue.

²The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition says that Lord Ram's holy Name is the 'Tarak Mantra', i.e. it is a spiritual formula that grants liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to a creature. At the same time, it is a formula which grants joy, happiness, peace and bliss to the creature in this world while he lives in it. This is what is meant here. The holy Name of Lord Ram is the single-dose remedy for all spiritual ills and worldly torments from which a living being suffers.

Tulsidas has extolled the glories of Lord Ram's name and his divine story in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 31—to Doha no. 32.

Refer also to: (a) Dohawali, verse nos. 14, 570; (b) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 70, 76, 254-255.]

कहत सुनत सुमिरत सुठि नीके । राम लखन सम प्रिय तुलसी के ॥ ३ ॥
बरनत बरन प्रीति बिलगाती । ब्रह्म जीव सम सहज सँघाती ॥ ४ ॥

kahata sunata sumirata suṭhi nīkē. rāma lakhana sama priya tulasī kē. 3.
 baranata barana prīti bilagāṭī. brahma jīva sama sahaja samṅhātī. 4.

The two letters of the holy Name of Lord Ram are sweet, pleasant and delightful to speak, to hear and to remember; and they are as dear to Tulsidas as are Lord Ram and Laxman themselves are to him¹. (3)

The two letters (Raa and Ma) lose their harmony and profound spiritual significance and value when pronounced separately just as Brahm (the Supreme Reality; the cosmic Soul) and Jiva (the individual creature; the individual soul) appear to be different entities but are essentially the same. (4)

[¹To wit, these two letters ‘Raa’ and ‘Ma’ of the holy Name of Lord Ram represent Lord Ram and his younger brother Laxman for Tulsidas, and so he reverses them as personified forms of the two brothers.

A similar idea that both Lord Ram and Laxman are equally dear to Tulsidas has been expressed in Vinai Patrika, verse no. 36, stanza no. 5.

There are other references in Ram Charit Manas where we see that both Lord Ram and Laxman are equally praised and revered. Some of these are: Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 193; Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 216; Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 315; Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 248.

When the two brothers had gone out to visit the city of Janakpur, all the citizens were equally captivated by their charm. This is evident in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 220—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 225.

The same was the condition of the king of Janakpur when he had first seen the two brothers with sage Vishwamitra. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 215—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 216.

The glory of the two letters of the Lord’s name are extolled in Vinai Patrika, verse no. 67 too.

²Brahm is the Supreme Being who represents the cosmic Consciousness at the universal or the macro level of creation, while the Jiva is the living being who represents the same Consciousness at the individual or the micro level of creation.

According to metaphysical principles expounded in the Upanishads, there is no fundamental difference between the two, i.e. Jiva and Brahm are the same. When a living being becomes aware and convinced of this universal and irrefutable spiritual Truth, he is said to be ‘self-realised and enlightened’. Otherwise, when he thinks that the Jiva and Brahm are two separate entities, he is said to be deluded and ignorant.

To wit, the two letters ‘Raa’ and ‘Ma’ of the holy Name of Lord Ram (pronounced as ‘Rāma’ or ‘Raam’) are inseparable from one another, and they must always be remembered and invoked together to produce the desired spiritual effect. If they are separated from one another then they become ordinary letters of the alphabet.

We can take a simple example to understand this principle. A magnet has two poles—north and south. A magnet has no existence and loses its strength to either pull or repel iron if it loses this uniqueness of having two poles. During electrolysis we have a negative ion and a positive ion; there cannot be electrolysis without the

presence of the two. Every human being breathes, and it consists of inhalation and exhalation. There is no life in the body if any one of these two processes stop. A flame produces light; no one can separate the flame from its light; both must co-exist. Where there is a sun there is warmth and light; they are inseparable from one another.

In the same way, the two letters Raa and Ma of the holy Name of Lord Ram cannot be separated from one another. They produce good spiritual effects only when invoked together.

This fact has been explicitly expressed in Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 217; and (b) Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 14.]

नर नारायन सरिस सुभ्राता । जग पालक बिसेषि जन त्राता ॥ ५ ॥

भगति सुतिय कल करन बिभूषन । जग हित हेतु बिमल बिधु पूषन ॥ ६ ॥

nara nārāyana sarisa subhrātā. jaga pālaka bisēṣi jana trātā. 5.

bhagati sutiya kala karana bibhūṣana. jaga hita hētu bimala bidhu pūṣana. 6.

Like the two divine brothers Lords Nara and Narayan¹, these two auspicious letters of the holy Name of Lord Ram (i.e. Raa and Ma) take care of the entire creation.

In a general way, these two letters (that symbolize Lord Ram and Laxman) are the protectors and sustainers of the whole world, without any discrimination, but more specifically they are particular about the welfare of the devotees of the Lord and grant redemption to them, assuring them of freedom from torments and sufferings of all manner in this world. (5)

They are like beautiful ear-rings that act as adornments of a sweet maiden named 'Bhakti'. [Here, the grand spiritual virtue of faith, devotion, love, affection and dedication for Lord God, and submission to him without any conceit and pretensions, has been personified. These virtues are called 'Bhakti'.]²

As for the world, they are like the spotless and untainted celestial bodies known as the Sun and the Moon³. (6)

[¹The story goes that Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, took birth as two great sages known as 'Nara' and 'Narayan' from the womb of Murti, the daughter of Daksha Prajapati and the wife of Dharma. Nara and Narayan were personified form of the Lord himself, and so were images of calmness and peace like their Father. They were highly enlightened and self-realised from birth, and thus did not wish to get involved in the routine affairs of creation and the mundane world. So they renounced all attachments and went to the Himalayas to do deep meditation. It is believed that they are still meditating at a place called Badrikashram or Badrinath which is located in the upper reaches of the Himalayan range of mountains in the north of India, and is one of the four most sacred pilgrim places of the country.

According to a legend narrated in Jaimini Bharat, there was a demon known as Sahastra-kavachi. He got this name because he had once done severe penance and pleased the Sun-God. When asked to seek a boon or blessing of his desire, the demon got a boon that his body should be protected by thousands of shields or impregnable vests known as 'Kavach' so that no one can kill him. When told that all those who

have taken birth must die and so he must ask for a boon that does not go against this inviolable rule of creation, the demon found a clever way to circumvent it. So he asked for a boon that only when someone fights with him for a thousand years would he be able to break only one of his shields of vests, but as soon as this happens the enemy would immediately die himself. Lords Nara and Narayan were born to kill this demon. One of the two brothers spent time in doing penances and meditation while the other fought with the demon for a thousand years and break one of his thousand body-vests, but as soon as it happened that brother died in accordance with the boon. Then the other brother who had been doing penance and meditation till now brought the first brother to life again by use of Mantras and transmitting the good result of his spiritual practices, and took up the battle himself while the revived brother engaged in doing severe penance and austerity to regain mystical powers. This cycle continued for ages till the time only one last shield was left. The cunning demon escaped the battle-field and took shelter in the blazing sun. Then the two brothers Nara and Narayan went to do penance and meditation together to acquire combined strength to overcome him and face the heat of the sun.

It is believed that during Dwapar age (when Lord Krishna was born), this demon took birth as Karna who is said to have been born with a Kavach (a thick layer of hard and impregnable tissue like the shell of a tortoise) around his body. He was killed by Arjun and Lord Krishna who are, according to this legend, incarnations of Nara and Narayan respectively. It ought to be noted here that the word 'Nara' means a Jiva, a living being, here representing Arjun, and the word 'Narayan' means Lord Vishnu, here representing Lord Krishna.

The formless and attributeless form of the Supreme Being is too abstract and difficult to understand, relate to, access and invoke for ordinary living beings. So here the Lord's manifested form as Nara and Narayan has been cited. The idea is that a devotee can overcome even the most stubborn of his sins and misdeeds if he takes recourse to the powerful name of Lord Ram, because its two letters would be able to eliminate his sins one by one just like Lord Nara and Narayan had destroyed one-shield-at-a-time of the demon Shashtra-kavach.

Another reason for citing the story of the two brothers Nara and Narayan is that just like they were born from the same mother (Murti, the wife of Dharma), Lord Ram's holy Name has its origin in the tongue which acts like its mother—because a person uses the tongue to pronounce this holy Name. To wit, just like Murti produced Nara and Narayan, her two sons, the tongue produces the two letters Raa and Ma of the holy Name of Lord Ram.

And just like 'Dharma' being the worldly father of Nara and Narayan who actually were personified form of Lord Vishnu, the two letters of Lord Ram too represent all that is auspicious and righteous, or a personified form of 'Dharma' in this world, and at the same time they represent Lord Vishnu who had revealed himself in the physical form of Lord Ram.

²To wit, Bhakti would lose its charms if the devotee does not use Lord Ram's holy Name in his spiritual endeavours.

³To wit, just like the sun and the moon adorn the sky and are like the two shining jewels that illuminate the world that would have been dark in the absence of these two celestial bodies, the two holy letters of the name of Lord Ram, i.e. Raa and Ma, shine

and illuminate the entire spectrum of spiritualism for a wise man. Just like the sun and the moon that remove the darkness of the world below, the two letters of the Lord's holy name remove the darkness in a devotee's life. All other Mantras etc. are like the stars that dot the night sky, but even as the combined light of all the stars is unable to illuminate either the sky or the earth below, all the Mantras taken together wouldn't be able to grant spiritual peace, bliss and redemption to a person; they won't be able to grant liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to his soul.]

स्वाद तोष सम सुगति सुधा के । कमठ सेष सम धर बसुधा के ॥ ७ ॥
जन मन मंजु कंज मधुकर से । जीह जसोमति हरि हलधर से ॥ ८ ॥

svāda tōṣa sama sugati sudhā kē. kamaṭha sēṣa sama dhara basudhā kē. 7.
jana mana maṅju kaṅja madhukara sē. jīha jasōmati hari haladhara sē. 8.

These two divine letters taste like nectar and have the latter's qualities that grant contentedness, joy and bliss to all. [To wit, these two letters of the Lord's holy Name are as refreshing and rejuvenating as nectar, and they give immense bliss and joy to the soul of a creature as if he has actually drunk nectar.]

They symbolically support and protect life on this earth (i.e. they look after the welfare and well-being of all living beings in this world) just like the divine Tortoise did (when it supported life on earth by holding it on its back and preventing it from sinking into the nether world at the time of the churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons), and like the Serpent God (known as Sheshnath) who does so even today (by holding the earth on its hood)¹. (7)

For the devotees' mind which is comparable to a lotus, the two letters of Lord Ram's holy Name are like the bees (that continuously hover above the lotus flower to drink its nectar)².

For the tongue which is symbolically like mother Yashodha, these two letters are like Lord Krishna and his brother Balaram respectively (hari haladhara sē)³. (8)

[¹In some ancient time when the Gods and Demons had churned the ocean in search of Amrit, the liquid of immortality, they had used Mt. Mandrachal as the churning rod and the celestial serpent Seshnath as the rope. At that time Lord Vishnu had assumed the form of a Tortoise and supported the great mountain from below so that it did not drill through the earth and split it into two or push it under its weight to sink into the nether world.

In Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, Canto 234, verse nos. 17-18 we read that at the end of this churning the Gods had offered their prayers to honour Lord Tortoise and requested him to help Seshnath (the legendary Serpent) and other Diggajs (mythological mighty Elephants) to support the earth from below. It is believed that Seshnath holds the earth on his thousand hoods, and he is aided by the Elephants who support the earth at its corners, while the Great Tortoise supports the earth on its shell and helps the Seshnath and the Diggajs in their effort to carry the earth aloft. The Tortoise ensures that they do not get tired, and the earth does not slip and fall.

²The bees hum and buzz continuously over the lotus flower; some of them alight on the flower to drink its nectar. This metaphor implies that the tongue of a devotee continuously repeats the holy Name of Lord Ram so much so that the sound produced by this chanting creates a continuous humming sound around the devotee. It seems that the devotee's mind is like a bee that derives intense pleasure in repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram and remain submerged in the bliss that is got by this repetition. The constant humming produced by repetition of the word "Raam" creates vibrations that sooth the devotee's mind and nerves so much so that he does not wish to think of anything else.

³The word 'Haldhar' also means 'a person who holds a plough' which he uses to plough his fields, the other word 'Hari' also means 'green', a reference to the lush green fields, and the word 'Jasomati' may mean 'a mind that is wise and one that gives fame to a person'. So in the context of this metaphor we can interpret this verse to mean that a wise person uses Lord Ram's holy Name to plough and ready his field symbolized by his life and his inner-self so that a good harvest of spiritual values are accumulated in it, which in turn would give him immense joy and happiness just like a farmer who rejoices when he sees his green field full of rich crop.

Just like the field that is made usable by the plough, repeating the Lord's holy Name prepares a man to make good use of his life and render it worthwhile and auspicious. Just like farmer who works with his plough first so that he can enjoy a good harvest later on, a wise person is one who uses the holy Name of Lord Ram to prepare his life and inner-self to welcome spiritualism and good virtues such as piety, holiness, saintliness etc. in order to enjoy spiritual bliss, peace, happiness and redemption later on in life.]

दो०. एकु छत्रु एकु मुकुटमनि सब बरननि पर जोड ।
तुलसी रघुबर नाम के बरन बिराजत दोड ॥ २० ॥
dōhā.

ēku chatru ēku mukuṭamani saba baranani para jō'u.
tulasī raghubara nāma kē barana birājata dō'u. 20.

Tulsidas says: 'Lo and Behold! The two letters of Lord Ram's holy Name (i.e. 'Raa' and 'Ma') crown all the other alphabets of the Sanskrit or the Hindi language—the former acts as an 'umbrella' and the latter acts as a 'crown-jewel'. (Doha no. 20)

[The 1st letter 'Raa' of the Lord's name Raam or 'Rāma' consists of two parts—viz. the Sanskrit consonant 'Ra' and vowel sound of 'Aa/ā', which is the second vowel of the alphabet. The first letter 'Ra' and the vowel sound of 'Aa' are integral to the first half of the holy Name (Ra + ā).

When the letter 'Ra' or the vowel sound of 'Aa' are used in conjunction with any other consonant of the alphabet, then they are represented in the form of a 'curved line' placed on the top of the concerned letter. This curved line is called a 'ref' in Sanskrit grammar. It is shaped like an 'umbrella' that is placed above the letter concerned.

Similarly, the 2nd letter ‘Ma’ of the name of Lord Ram (‘Rā + ma’) is converted into a ‘dot’, known as an ‘anuswar’, that is placed on the top of another letter (a consonant) when ‘Ma’ is used in conjunction with it. The resultant sound is equivalent to the English letter M as in *mum*, *hum*). The effect is that it looks like it was a ‘crown jewel’ put on the top of the letter.

So in this verse, Tulsidas means that both the letters of Lord Ram’s holy Name are so glorious that one acts like an umbrella or a parasol held on the head of a king, and the other acts like the crown jewel worn on the head of the king. Just like the case of a king acquiring his dignity and stature by the virtue of the umbrella held over his head and the jewel that adorns his crown, the two letters of Lord Ram’s holy Name give glory to all other letters that form Beej Mantras for different Gods and Goddesses. Devoid of these two holy letters of Lord Ram’s name, all other letters that stand for various Beej Mantras lose their effectiveness and glory, and so does the beauty of the language itself as a whole.]

चौ०. समुद्रत सरिस नाम अरु नामी । प्रीति परसपर प्रभु अनुगामी ॥ १ ॥

नाम रूप दुइ ईस उपाधी । अकथ अनादि सुसामुझि साधी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

samujhata sarisa nāma aru nāmī. prīti parasapara prabhu anugāmī. 1.
nāma rūpa du’i īsa upādhī. akatha anādi susāmujhi sādhi. 2.

The ‘Name’ and the person ‘Named’ (i.e. the person to whom the name refers to, in this case Lord Ram), though apparently appearing to be synonymous with each other because they refer to the same entity, are actually different from one another but very closely allied to each other just like the relationship that exists between a ‘master’ and a ‘loyal follower or servant’ of his. [To wit, first the Lord’s Name is pronounced, and then the Lord reveals himself before the worshipper or the devotee. Hence, the ‘Name’ has precedence over the ‘Named’.]¹ (1)

The ‘Name’ (nāma) and the ‘Form’ (rūpa) are the two attributes of the Lord God (du’i īsa upādhī)—both are so great that they are beyond the reach of words (i.e. words cannot describe their glory and majesty), and both of them are without a beginning or an end. This principle can only be understood by those who have the proper wisdom, and are enlightened enough to grasp it². (2)

[¹The ‘Name’ refers to the holy Name of Lord Ram, and the ‘Named’ refers to the Lord himself. In this simile, the Name of the Lord is like the ‘Master’ (prabhu), while the Lord himself is like the ‘person’, literally an ‘obedient follower’ (anugāmī) who follows his Master.

It is easy to understand this philosophy. When anyone wishes to call a person or draw his attention, he calls out to the latter using his name, and then that person knows that he is being called and so he responds immediately. Hence, when a devotee or a worshipper remembers Lord Ram and wishes to invite the Lord or invoke his mercy and grace, he first remembers and invokes the Lord by his name, and then the Lord himself makes his presence felt and blesses the devotee or the worshipper. So therefore, the ‘Name’ (RAM) acquires precedence over the ‘Named’ (Lord Ram himself in a personified form).

There is another way of interpreting this verse. The ‘Name’ of the Lord, when pronounced, consists of a ‘sound’ that represents the invisible, cosmic and universal form of the Lord just like OM that represents the cosmic Consciousness which is invisible and all-pervading. This cosmic, all-pervading, subtle and invisible form of the Lord represented by the sound of the letters ‘RAM’ revealed itself in the physical grosser form of Lord Ram, a form which is like any other human being.

Even from the perspective of creation, first the invisible, all-encompassing, all-pervading and macrocosmic form of ‘Prakriti’ or Nature appeared, and then came into being its microcosmic visible form as individual entities that formed the infinite maze that constituted the vast grid of creation. Similarly, first comes the basic letters that form the name of an individual, the letters that combine to form a word (the ‘name’— *nāma*) that would identify that individual, and then comes the individual himself (the ‘named’— *nāmī*).

In this scenario, the ‘name’ of Lord Ram (*nāma*) is deemed to be senior or superior to the Lord’s ‘physical form’ (*nāmī*) because of a variety of reasons. For instance, the name of the Lord can be remembered and invoked at anytime by anyone, and it immediately grants relief to the worshipper or the devotee as it is a powerful spiritual Mantra which is a divine spiritual formula that possesses unique cosmic powers and dynamism that produce instantaneous results of astounding proportions when a person invokes it. On the other hand, the physical form of Lord Ram would have its own practical limitations by the virtue of it being a physical gross body (as compared to the ‘name’ which is extremely subtle by its very nature, because it is merely a ‘sound’ that exists in ether and covers the entire space that is available to it).

²This verse draws from the eclectic metaphysical philosophy of the Upanishads which says that the divine word OM is a sound representation of the vibrations produced by the cosmic Consciousness, and its manifested form is known as Brahm, the Supreme Being. To wit, Brahm is a personified form of OM representing supreme Consciousness at the macrocosmic and the subtlest level of creation. The entire creation is a revelation of this Brahm. To wit, when we deal with this Brahm at the microcosmic level of creation, we talk of the individual living being known as the Jiva and his individual Atma or soul which is the Jiva’s individual identity that is specific to him. This unique identity of the Jiva is represented in the form of the Jiva’s personal name. So therefore we say that the Name and the Form are the two aspects of the same entity. In the case of Lord Ram, his divine Name ‘RAM (Rāma or Raam)’ and his physical form by which we know and recognize him are the same thing because they refer to the same Lord.

And who is this ‘Lord’? He is not any ordinary prince or king or human being even though he was born in a human form. The fact is that he is the Supreme Lord of the World, a personified form of the invisible supreme Brahm and of the equally invisible and supreme cosmic Consciousness. This latter entity, i.e. the cosmic Consciousness, is indescribable and beyond comprehension; it is beyond the purview of the mind and the reach of the intellect. So it is said that the Name and the Form that refers to Lord Ram are beyond understanding; they are infinite and eternal like Brahm and supreme Consciousness. Only those who are wise are able to understand the significance of this principle. For the ignorant and the less initiated, Lord Ram is merely a great king who ruled over an ancient kingdom known by the name of Ayodhya. They don’t know who the Lord actually was.]

को बड़ छोट कहत अपराधू । सुनि गुन भेदु समुझिहहिं साधू ॥ ३ ॥
देखिअहिं रूप नाम आधीना । रूप ग्यान नहिं नाम बिहीना ॥ ४ ॥

kō baṛa chōṭa kahata aparādhū. suni guna bhēdu samujhiahim sādhu. 3.
dēkhi'ahim rūpa nāma ādhinā. rūpa gyāna nahim nāma bihīnā. 4.

Both the 'name' and the 'form' of the Lord are of equal importance. So it would be improper and impudent to call any one of them as being greater or lesser in importance than the other. However, saints understand the subtle difference between the two (as has been explained in the preceding verses herein above) after hearing or taking into consideration their merits, virtues and glories¹. (3)

Forms are visible manifestations of the entity that is known by a particular name, and hence the 'form' is dependent on the 'name'. Therefore, the 'name' acquires precedence over the 'form', because without the name of any person or thing one cannot know or visualise or think about that person's or thing's physical existence in a given form. To wit, without knowing the name it is not possible to identify and relate with a particular person². (4)

[¹To wit, it is wrong to call one or the other as being superior or inferior. Only pious souls or Sadhus will understand this secret after hearing and understanding the essence of the metaphysical philosophy behind them as has been explained in the preceding verses.

²When we say a particular name, say that of our son, his picture immediately comes to our mind. Therefore, the 'image' or the 'physical form' of the son is directly dependent upon his 'name'. When we talk about a person by the name of 'Ram', his physical form, characters, virtues, nature and other attributes immediately come to our mind. When we mention 'Ram' we think of 'Ram', and not of anybody else who is *not* Ram.

Suppose we see a stranger and wish to establish an abiding relationship with him. We ask him his or her name. Otherwise it becomes absolutely impossible to relate to, or remember and establish contact with that person in the future. We can remember a stranger's face, but how can we identify him and tell others about him if they too wish to have contact with him if we don't know his name? And once the stranger's name is known, he becomes a familiar person to us in the future. So therefore it is deduced that 'name' takes precedence over 'form'.]

रूप बिसेष नाम बिनु जानें । करतल गत न परहिं पहिचानें ॥ ५ ॥
सुमिरिअ नाम रूप बिनु देखें । आवत हृदयँ सनेह बिसेषें ॥ ६ ॥

rūpa bisēṣa nāma binu jānēm. karatala gata na parahim pahicānēm. 5.
sumiri'a nāma rūpa binu dēkhēm. āvata hṛdayam sanēha bisēṣēm. 6.

A person cannot be identified and known without first knowing his name though he may be in front of our eyes. (5)

But if the name of a person is known and when we remember that name, then even without seeing that person physically as soon as that name is mentioned we can immediately identify the person and remember his characteristic and attributes. His picture flashes in the mind even though he is not physically present at the place. And if that person is someone who is near and dear to our heart, then the mere mention or remembrance of his name would immediately evokes affection and love for him. (6)

[The idea expressed in these verses is simple and straightforward. It means that when a devotee invokes the holy 'name' of Lord Ram, then the Lord's divine glories and his majestic powers immediately come to the mind as do his story and the 'physical form' that has been described in the scriptures, even though the devotee has not personally seen the Lord in a physical form.

As soon as the name of Lord Ram is said, the listener draws a mental picture of the Lord that he has come to know of by the reading and hearing of the scriptures.

Hence, the mere remembrance or invocation of the holy Name of Lord Ram helps the devotee to feel the presence of the Lord near him. To wit, the 'name' of the Lord helps the devotee to establish a direct contact with the Lord himself. It is like a bridge between the Lord and the devotee; it is like a communication channel between the two of them!

Since in this case the 'name' belongs to Lord Ram who is very dear to the devotee, so as soon as the Lord's name is remembered or invoked the devotee feels a surge of affectionate emotions for Lord Ram in his heart. The devotee is filled with joy and ecstasy by simply remembering the holy Name of Lord Ram even though the Lord is not actually present near him in a physical form.]

नाम रूप गति अकथ कहानी । समुझत सुखद न परति बखानी ॥ ७ ॥

अगुन सगुन बिच नाम सुसाखी । उभय प्रबोधक चतुर दुभाषी ॥ ८ ॥

nāma rūpa gati akatha kahānī. samujhata sukhada na parati bakhānī. 7.
aguna saguna bica nāma susākhī. ubhaya prabōdhaka catura dubhāṣī. 8.

The mystery of the greatness of story of the 'Name' and the 'Form' cannot be so easily told (as it is mystical and profound in nature). Though it is delightful and fascinating to understand their relationship, it is difficult to explain it. [To wit, the relationship between the 'name' and the 'form' of Lord Ram is a complex one, and it cannot be outlined by words so easily; it has to be understood by application of the mind, and it can be understood by intelligence and wisdom alone.] (7)

The 'Name' is an intermediary between the Supreme Being who is 'formless', all-pervading, invisible, cosmic, unqualified and attributeless, and the Lord's divine revelation in which has a 'Form' which is visible, has its own unique qualities and attributes.

The 'Name' of the Lord is like a clever interpreter who reveals the Truth of the visible 'Form' that the Lord had assumed in order to make his primarily sublime, subtle, invisible and attributeless cosmic form made accessible to his devotees so that they can easily relate themselves to him and feel closer to their beloved Lord. [To wit,

The holy Name of the Lord, i.e. the word ‘RAM’ (‘Rāma’ or ‘Raam’), is an intermediary between the Supreme Being and his divine revelation in the physical form as Lord Ram.] (8)

[The complexities of the relationship between the Lord’s holy Name and his divine form and their inter-dependence have been explained earlier in notes appended to Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that follow Doha no. 20 herein above.

To put in simple words, the holy ‘Name’ of Lord Ram is a bridge that helps to establish a link between the Lord’s cosmic form as the Supreme Being and his visible ‘form’ that is easily known, accessible and understandable, the ‘form’ of the Lord as a human being known by the name of ‘Ram’.

The holy Name of the Lord, i.e. the word ‘RAM’ (‘Rāma’ or ‘Raam’), is an intermediary between the Supreme Being and his divine revelation in the physical form as Lord Ram.

Now, when it is said that “it has to be understood by application of the mind, and it can be understood by intelligence and wisdom alone” it is meant that only a wise man would know the Truth of who Lord Ram actually is. For the lesser wise souls, those who lack wisdom, enlightenment and knowledge of the essence and philosophy of the scriptures, Lord Ram is some great King of an ancient kingdom of Ayodhya. But for those who are wiser and knowledgeable, Lord Ram is a personified form of the Lord of the World, the manifested form of the Supreme Being.

So therefore, the ‘name’ of the Lord, i.e. the word ‘RAM’ (‘Rāma’ or ‘Raam’), would immediately remind the wise of the Supreme Being himself. When they use the name ‘Ram’, they think of the ‘Lord of the World’, instead of some ancient great King or Emperor who ruled over some mighty kingdom or empire.

Thus, for a wise and enlightened person, the repetition of the ‘name’ of the Lord, i.e. the word RAM, becomes a spiritual exercise involving a sacred Mantra. To wit, wise and intelligent persons do Japa (repetition of some mystically empowered formula) when they repeat the seemingly ordinary word ‘Ram’, and this then becomes a means for attaining spiritual blessedness, bliss, peace, happiness, emancipation and salvation for them. For others who aren’t wise and are foolish so, the same word ‘Ram’ remains merely the ‘name’ of some great person of this particular name who was a great King in some ancient time! The difference is so stark and obvious that even a blind won’t miss it.]

दो०. राम नाम मनिदीप धरु जीह देहरीं द्वार।

तुलसी भीतर बाहेरहुँ जौं चाहसि उजिआर ॥ २१ ॥

dōhā.

rāma nāma manidīpa dharu jīha dēharīm dvāra.
tulasī bhītara bāhērahūṁ jāum cāhasi ujī’āra. 21.

Tulsidas says that if you want ‘light’ both inside and outside of yourself (i.e. the virtues of spiritual awareness, self-realisation, enlightenment and knowledge of your own ‘truthful self’ known as the Atma or the soul which is pure consciousness on the one hand, and of the universal Truth about the essential nature of the Atma or the ‘self’ as being an image of the Parmatma or the cosmic Self which is nothing but the

cosmic Consciousness that has revealed itself as the individual's Atma)— then you should keep the self-illuminated gem or a lamp symbolized by Lord Ram's holy Name on the doorway or the threshold of your mouth (i.e. your lips)¹. (Doha no. 21)

[¹To wit, you should constantly chant the holy Name of the Lord with your tongue because it will purify your inner-self by cleansing it of all its spiritual impurities, thereby enabling you to experience the truth of the Atma within yourself, and to acquire sufficient light of wisdom that would enable you to realise the Supreme Truth of existence in the form of the Parmatma. This is like 'being shown light within and without'.

The holy Name of Lord Ram would clean the inner-self and shine light into the darkness of the heart and mind so that the spiritual gloom of ignorance and delusions are removed, and instead there is illumination of self-realisation that entitles the devotee to experience the bliss and joy that comes from deep within his own self, and which in turn makes his external life full of joy and happiness in this world. The devotee feels carefree and delightful that Lord Ram is always with him to take care of his spiritual and worldly needs, day in and day out, in thick and thin, in storm and sunshine, come what may. The devotee is rid of all his worries and torments.

Even as ghosts and phantoms run away when there is light, all sorts of delusions and horrors of life that would otherwise dominate the Spirit and keep it subdued take to their heels when a person invokes the holy Name of Lord Ram and chants it constantly with his tongue. Nay, not only that, even remembering the holy Name suffices to light up the inner-self and chase away darkness from the hidden chambers of the heart and the mind.

The 'mouth' is the only opening of the body by which a person communicates or interacts with the external world. It is also the opening by which he eats and drinks to sustain life inside his own self. So if this opening is well illuminated with the help of a lighted lantern symbolizing Lord Ram's holy Name that is kept aloft on the tongue, thieves, scoundrels and mischief-mongers symbolizing all sorts of worldly evils and sins and negative thoughts would dare not enter a person's inner-self and cause peril for him. Just like we need light to see what we eat and drink, and avoid things that would make us sick if eaten or drunk, the holy Name of Lord Ram stands as a guard to protect us against things that are demeaning, bad and foul for our soul.

The idea expressed in this Doha has been reiterated elsewhere also. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-6 that precede Doha no. 120.

The following verses further elaborate on this theme.]

चौ०. नाम जीहँ जपि जागहिं जोगी । बिरति बिरंचि प्रपंच बियोगी ॥ १ ॥

ब्रह्मसुखहि अनुभवहिं अनूपा । अकथ अनामय नाम न रूपा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

nāma jīham'japi jāgahim jōgī. birati biran'ci prapañca biyōgī. 1.

brahma sukhahi anubhavahim anūpā. akatha anāmaya nāma na rūpā. 2.

Yogis (ascetics; mystics) who are full of dispassion and they possess the eclectic virtue of exemplary detachment and renunciation from this gross material world. They thereby enjoy happiness and profound bliss because they chant Lord Ram's holy

Name with their tongue. In this way, they remain awake and delightful in a dark and foreboding night (symbolized by delusions that pervade this gross mundane world in which all other creatures are either restless in their dreams while they sleep, or remain restless and terrified because of the shadows of ghosts and phantoms that they see even if they are awake)¹. (1)

They are always involved in contemplation and meditation upon the supreme Brahm, and experience the bliss of Brahm-realisation. This Brahm cannot be described in words, is incomparable, nameless and formless. Therefore, the bliss of Brahm-realisation also cannot be described in words, as it is not comparable to anything else that it can be understood. [To wit, it can be ‘experienced and realised’ at a subtle plane, but cannot be understood by logic at the grosser plane of the mundane world.]² (2)

[¹Ascetics and mystics remain aloof from the affairs of this gross world as they understand that all its charms are illusive and false. They focus on the ‘Truth’ instead, and they strive to find an eternal and truthful source of bliss, happiness and joy. This they find by chanting the holy Name of Lord Ram, and using it for meditation and contemplation. In this way, they attain a state of blissfulness and contentedness.

By saying that they are ‘awake in this world’ it is meant that they are aware of the perils of getting entangled in the web of delusions and their attendant miseries that are so characteristic of this gross transient world. They know that true happiness and peace would always elude them if they allow themselves to get involved in this world. So they keep a safe distance to avoid their boat being capsized.

Like an alert pilot who remains awake during the night while steering a ship across a rough sea, wise Yogis who chant Lord Ram’s holy Name are able to steer the boat of their lives clear of all the crooked and perilous outcrops and sandbars and reefs and dense undergrowths that form the shoreline of this world in order to reach their spiritual destination safe and sound. To wit, they use the holy Name of Lord Ram as an illuminated boat that takes them across the high sea of this tumultuous world to their destination of freedom that grants emancipation and salvation to their soul. Such wise Yogis find eternal bliss and peace and happiness for themselves. The phantoms and ghosts of the night symbolized by this world do not terrify them.

These alert Yogis manage to steer their boat safely across the symbolic rough sea representing mundane life in this gross material world during a tempestuous night full of horrifying delusions, and of worldly temptations and torments? Well, they meditate upon Lord Ram by invoking his holy Name. This keeps them awake and well-oriented. It helps them keep their inner cool and overcome all anxiety about their fate. So their mind and heart are calm and rested and controlled, and by-and-by they easily reach their destination without any mishap.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-5 that precede Doha no. 93 which say: “Everyone is fast asleep in the night made thick by the darkness of Maya symbolising worldly delusions, attachments and horrors. Only wise ascetics who are contemplative, have renounced all attachments with this world and think about the good of others are said to be awake in this night. Indeed, without gainsay and in all sooth, one must regard a creature as being awake in this world if he has completely distanced himself from all attachment with the material world. It is then that the light of self-realisation and wisdom dawns on the horizon of the creature’s inner-self, and it is also only then that he begins to have abiding love, affection and devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram.”

We read a similar thing in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 56 which says: “Abandon the notion of mine and yours, of me and you, if you wish to wake up from sleep in the dark and foreboding night symbolized by the great delusions created by Moha (attachment, infatuation and longing).”

We read in Vinai Patrika, verse no. 140, stanza no. 2 that: “Worldly people remain entangled in a web of worldly ties and affairs, and they are so unfortunate that they never realize their folly as their mind never wakes up to the reality.”

A similar idea is expressed in Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 31 which says: “In the night of youthfulness you have become enamoured of the pleasures of the senses (in the form of another person’s woman). You do not get renunciation (or are not inspired) even after looking at the gate keepers of Yam (the God of Death and Hell) in the form of sorrows, diseases, separations and various losses that you witness happening all around you in this horrifying world. You have forgotten all the horrors of your previous life and those suffered by you in the past in this life itself due to attachments and delusions that surround you. Now it is dawn, so wake up and run away from all this great fear created by ignorance. The death and its attendant agonies in the shape of a sun have risen in the east represented by your old age. Oh you dud! You still don’t wake up, how utterly stupid you are!”

²These wise Yogis invoke the holy Name of Lord Ram to attain the bliss of Brahm-realisation, which means ‘self-realisation’ because the true ‘self’ is known as the Atma or soul, and this Atma is a personified form of pure consciousness. This ‘consciousness’ that resides inside an individual is the same the cosmic Consciousness that pervades uniformly in this creation, and which is also manifested in the form of Brahm known as the Supreme Being. So therefore, realizing Brahm is equivalent to realizing one’s own true ‘self’, and vice versa.

The Atma is a source of bliss and beatitude, and realizing this Atma makes the Yogi full of bliss and beatitude. And the medium by which it is made possible is the holy Name of Lord Ram. To wit, the name of the Lord acts as an intermediary between the Yogi and Brahm, and the Yogi attains blissfulness, beatitude and felicity right here in this life, and at the same time he is assured of deliverance, emancipation and salvation of his soul after death of the body.]

जाना चाहिं गूढ़ गति जेऊ । नाम जीहँ जपि जानहिं तेऊ ॥ ३ ॥

साधक नाम जपहिं लय लाएँ । होहिं सिद्ध अनिमादिक पाएँ ॥ ४ ॥

jānā cahahim̐ gūṛha gati jē'ū. nāma jīham̐ japi jānahim̐ tē'ū. 3.

sādhaka nāma japahim̐ laya lā'ēm̐. hōhim̐ sid'dha animādika pā'ēm̐. 4.

Those who want to know (or discover) the Supreme Truth or the ultimate destination of the soul (gūṛha gati) are able to do so by chanting Lord Ram’s divine and holy Name by their tongue. (3)

Spiritual seekers (sādhaka) who are sincere in their practice and are regularly absorbed in contemplation and meditation, achieve super-human mystical powers (hōhim̐ sid'dha animādika pā'ēm̐) simply by repeating the Lord's mystical name

consistently, and with due concentration, devotion and faith (nāma japahim laya lā'ēm̐). (4)

[To wit, the holy Name of Lord Ram entitles the devotee to realize the Supreme Truth, as well as to attain mystical powers. The 'Supreme Truth' is about the true nature of the Atma, the pure conscious Soul. Lord Ram is a personified form of the cosmic Soul. So the Lord's holy Name enables the devotee to become enlightened enough to realize that his own Atma is a personified form of Lord Ram. It means that the Lord is not far away from him, but he resides in his own inner-being as the Atma.

Thus, all distance between the devotee and the Lord ends, and thus also ends the search for the Lord! And the name of the Lord repeated through the tongue while meditating becomes an instrument in this achievement.]

जपहिं नामु जन आरत भारी । मिटहिं कुसंकट होहिं सुखारी ॥ ५ ॥
राम भगत जग चारि प्रकारा । सुकृती चारिउ अनघ उदारा ॥ ६ ॥

japahim nāmu jana ārata bhārī. miṭahim kusaṅkaṭa hōhim sukhārī. 5.
rāma bhagata jaga cāri prakārā. sukṛtī cārī'u anagha udārā. 6.

When even the most tormented, distressed and gravely suffering devotees do Japa with the holy Name of Lord Ram (i.e. when they mutter or invoke the Lord's name and constantly repeat it as a symbol of taking shelter behind its protective shield), then all their worst of calamities, miseries and troubles are eliminated, and they become happy and delighted. [To wit, greatly distressed devotees who chant Lord Ram's holy Name are relieved of all their distresses and torments. As a natural blessing of the Lord, they become happy and contented.] (5)

There are four kinds of devotees of Lord Ram¹, and all of them are deemed to be fortunate, blessed, virtuous, sinless and noble at heart. (6)

[¹The four types of devotees are the following—(1) 'Aarta': There are two interpretation of this word. One refers to those who are extremely distressed and need immediate intervention of the Lord to help them overcome their sufferings. The other meaning refers to those devotees who are extremely eager to have an access to their Lord that they would go to any length to attain him. (2) 'Jigyasu': Those who are seekers of Truth, those who want to know and learn more about the Lord. (3) 'Artharthi': Those who worship the Lord so that their worldly desires are fulfilled as a blessing of the Lord. The word 'Artha' means wealth and prosperity. Hence, such devotees do not worship the Lord for any spiritual objective or because they love the Lord dearly, but because they hope that the Lord would fulfill their worldly desires to gain material welfare. And (4) 'Gyani': Those who are wise and have become realised and enlightened.

We observe here that there are four types of devotees who worship Lord Ram, and they have different reasons and motivations to do so. But all of them are said to be fortunate and blessed; all of them get merit for worshipping the Lord irrespective of why they worship him and why they invoke his holy Name. Why is it so?

The reason is this: On the one hand it is because of the graceful, kind, obliging and merciful nature of Lord Ram as he goes out of his way to extend his blessing even

on those who may otherwise not deserve it simply because they have remembered the Lord and invoked his holy Name, and so it becomes obligatory on the part of the Lord that he must bless all those who worship him and remember his holy Name for whatever reason.

And on the other hand it is because the Lord's holy Name is intrinsically purifying and so holy that no matter who invokes this name and remembers the Lord for whatever reason, the Lord ensures that his glorious name lives up to its reputation and does not fail to have its good, meritorious and positive effect on the person who utters it.

Lord Ram has said himself that: "Those who are sinful in their hearts and engrossed in sinful activities can never find interest in worshipping me and having devotion for me. Only those who have a pure and uncorrupt heart are able to come near me, for I do not like conceit, deceit, pretensions, falsehood and fraud". Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3 and 5 that precede Doha no. 44.

So therefore, notwithstanding for what reason a devotee worships Lord Ram, if he remembers the Lord and utters his holy Name then it is deemed that he is a noble soul as compared to others, and that his heart has a place for the Lord, and when the Lord dwells in the person's heart then that person is deemed to be blessed and fortunate.

It is like the case of the sunshine—it benefits one and all; both the good and the evil men enjoy the same warmth and light of the sun irrespective of their personal character and nature. The sun does not differentiate between anyone.

Similarly, nectar would have its good effect and poison its bad upon all those who drink them. Neither nectar nor poison would differentiate between two persons based on whether one is good and the other is evil.]

चहू चतुर कहूँ नाम अधारा । ग्यानी प्रभुहि बिसेषि पिआरा ॥ ७ ॥

चहूँ जुग चहूँ श्रुति नाम प्रभाऊ । कलि बिसेषि नहिं आन उपाऊ ॥ ८ ॥

cahū catura kahum̐ nāma adhārā. gyānī prabhuhi bisēṣi pi'ārā. 7.

cahum̐ juga cahum̐ śruti nāma prabhā'ū. kali bisēṣi nahim̐ āna upā'ū. 8.

All the four types of devotees are clever for they rely on Lord Ram's holy and all wish-fulfilling name. But out of these four, a 'Gyani' (the realised and enlightened one) is very dear to the Lord¹. (7)

The glory and greatness of Lord Ram's holy and divine Name is well known and well established in all the four Yugs (eras of time)², as well as in the four Vedas (Rig, Sam, Atharva and Yajur Veda).

In Kaliyug especially, there is no other means of salvation except taking recourse to the holy Name of Lord Ram³. (8)

[¹In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-7 that precede Doha no. 86, Lord Ram has said: "The entire creation and all its inhabitants were created by me, and I love all of them. Out of all the living beings, the humans are more dear to me. Amongst the humans, Brahmins (i.e. those who are learned and wise) are preferred by me. From amongst such Brahmins, I like those who are well versed in the Vedas and other scriptures. Out of them, I prefer those who actually follow the path shown by

these scriptures and practice their teachings in their own lives, i.e. who lead a noble, pious and auspicious life, and not merely preach others. Out of such exalted souls, I prefer those who have renounced all attachment with this delusionary world and are wise and enlightened (“Gyani”). Out of ordinary Gyanis, I like those who “Vigyanis”, i.e. those who are exemplary in their conduct and highly spiritually elevated, enlightened and self-realised so much so that they can set an example for others to follow. And out of all such exalted, enlightened and self-realised souls, I love them who are my devotees, who love me unconditionally, and who realize that attaining me is the ultimate goal of all spiritual pursuits”.

²The cycle of creation and destruction have been divided into four segments, each called a ‘Yuga’. According to Hindu scriptures, there are four such Yugs in one cycle of creation and destruction. These four ‘Yugs’ or eras are the following: Satyug, Tretayug (when Lord Ram manifested on earth), Dwaparyug (the era of Lord Krishna), and Kaliyug (the present era in which we live).

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 102—to Doha no. 103. Now let us briefly read what it says:

“[Kaagbhusund, the saintly crow, told Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu—] Listen, oh the Enemy of Serpents (“*byālāri*”; Garud)! The age of Kali is virtually an abode of darkness symbolising sins, turpitude, evil and vices.

But inspite of all its shortcomings and drawbacks, all its degeneration, perversities and depravities, Kaliyug has one exceptional worthwhile quality (or kind of a ‘ray of hope at the end of the dark tunnel’)—and it is that during this age a creature is able to get freedom easily from the web of birth and death that is so characteristic of life in this mundane and mortal world. [How this is made possible is explained below in the verses that follow herein below.] (Doha no. 102-a)

The spiritual objectives of a creature, and the attainment of liberation and deliverance of his soul from the cycle of birth and death with its accompanying chain of endless horrors and miseries, that could be achieved by making a lot of strenuous efforts such as doing worship (of gods and elements of Nature visualised as deities that symbolised divine forces), various sacrifices and meditation etc. (*pūjā makha aru jōga*) during the (three) ages that preceded Kaliyug, viz. the Sata Yug, the Treta Yug, and the Dwapar Yug respectively—the same spiritual rewards and the same pristine pure and holy destination for the soul is attainable by the creature simply by relying on the holy Name of the Lord God (here referring to the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram, the revealed form of the Supreme Being). (102-b)

In the age known as ‘Sata Yug’ (which is the first of the four-yug cycle that constitutes one round of creation and destruction), more or less everyone was like an ascetic; they were wise, self-realised, enlightened and had spiritual wisdom.

During this period, a Jiva (a creature; a living being) could cross the vast and fathomless ocean-like world of transmigration (the endless cycle of birth and death) by meditating upon Lord Hari (the Supreme Being’s cosmic all-pervading form). (Chaupai no. 1)

In the next era known as ‘Treta Yug’, men used to do various kinds of fire sacrifices and meritorious deeds. They attained liberation and deliverance (from the cycle of transmigration) by doing all such sacrifices and meritorious deeds selflessly and then offering whatever rewards that accrued due to such activities to the Lord God. [Since people did not wish to accept and enjoy any reward for their sacrifices they did, and offered all rewards of spiritual practices to the Lord God, their ‘Parent’,

so when they died their soul did not have to re-enter the cycle of birth and death to enjoy the rewards that had been accumulated and become due to them by the virtue of their doing fire and other sacrifices during their previous life. Thus, at the time of death of the physical body, their soul got emancipation and salvation.] (Chaupai no. 2)

During the age of Dwapar (the third era), men could cross over the vast ocean-like world of birth and death by offering worship, reverence and homage to the holy feet of Lord Raghupati (Lord Ram). There was no other alternative way or option. (Chaupai no. 3)

Finally, during Kaliyug, it is simply by singing and narrating the divine glories of Lord Hari (Lord Ram) that men can find the end of (i.e. cross) the huge and seemingly endless ocean symbolising the cycle of birth and death. (Chaupai no. 4)

Indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, in Kaliyug there is no (need for doing) Yoga (meditation), Yagya (fire and other sacrifices), and Gyan (having spiritual knowledge, being self-realised, acquiring wisdom and enlightenment).

The only source of spiritual succour and solace, the only basis by which one can derive joy and happiness is to sing hymns in praise of Lord Ram and his divinity, holiness and glories. (Chaupai no. 5)

Anyone who abandons all other hopes and stops relying on any other means to attain his spiritual objectives, and instead relies solely on worshipping Lord Ram and affectionately singing the Lord's hymns and glories --- (Chaupai no. 6)

--- Such a person is sure to cross this ocean-like world of birth and death; there is no doubt about it. [To wit, if a person relies only on worshipping Lord Ram and affectionately singing the hymns dedicated to the Lord that extol the Lord's glories, divinity and holiness, then it is sure that he will find liberation and deliverance for himself. He will not have to re-enter the cycle of birth and death.]

Forsooth and without gainsay, the astounding mystical powers that are inherent in Lord Ram's Name, and the spiritual significance of this holy, divine and sacred Name, is very evident and clearly manifested in the age of Kaliyug (more than any of the other three Yugs). (Chaupai no. 7)

There is one more wonderful and unique quality or glory of Kaliyug (that none of the other Yugs possessed)—and it is that during this age even if a person's mind and heart (i.e. his Mana) wishes to do some meritorious deed (though he may not be actually able to do it), he still gets the credit of it as if he has physically done that good deed. On the other hand, if a person merely thinks or wishes of doing some evil deed but actually does not do it, then the sin and taint (and therefore the punishment) associated with such bad or evil deed would not accrue to him. (Chaupai no. 8)

There is no other age as compared to Kaliyug if a person has faith in its rare virtues and capabilities (i.e. its ability to provide a person with the chance to attain his spiritual objectives most easily as has been enumerated in the foregoing verses herein above).

And one such rare ability or boon that Kaliyug possesses is this: A person can easily cross this vast and endless ocean-like world of transmigration known as 'Bhava' by simply singing (remembering, reciting and hearing) the divine glories and holy praises of Lord Ram. [To wit, by simply remembering the sacred story of Lord Ram that describes the Lord's glories and the deeds done by him during his sojourn in the mortal world, and understanding the hidden spiritual message that this story contains, a seeker can attain spiritual joy, happiness, blessedness and beatitude that would have required him to undertake many elaborate rituals and strenuous efforts in all other eras that preceded Kaliyug.] (Doha no. 103-a)

There are said to be four pillars or pedestals of Dharma—i.e. there are four ways in which one can gain spiritual merit. [These four ways are (i) Satya—truthfulness; (ii) Daya—mercy and compassion; (iii) Tapa—austerity and penance; and (iv) Daan—making charity and giving alms.]

In Kaliyug, the one pillar that is deemed to be the chief one is the act of doing ‘Daan’—i.e. giving alms and making charity selflessly as a means of getting spiritual rewards or accumulating spiritual merit. No matter in which way one does ‘Daan’, it would always serve him in good stead, it would always be conducive for his spiritual good and welfare. (Doha no. 103-b)”

Refer also to Chaupai line no. 2 that follows Doha no. 22 herein below.]

दो०. सकल कामना हीन जे राम भगति रस लीन ।

नाम सुप्रेम पियूष हृद तिन्हहुँ किए मन मीन ॥ २२ ॥

dōhā.

sakala kāmanā hīna jē rāma bhagati rasa līna.

nāma suprēma piyūṣa hrada tinahum̐ ki'ē mana mīna. 22.

Those who have tasted the juice of Lord Ram's devotion without hankering for any sort of desires are deemed to have made their mind into a fish which floats in the pond of nectar made of the lovable divine name of the Lord. (Doha no. 22)

[To wit, the mind of such devotees think of nothing else except enjoying the nectar that drips by repeating the Lord's holy Name. The ecstasy and thrill that comes with such repetition completely overwhelms them so much so that their condition becomes one like that of a fish which would die as soon as it is removed from water.

Just like the fish which would exchange everything for water, a true devotee of Lord Ram would exchange every joy and happiness attainable in this world for the sake of devotion for Lord Ram—for he knows the latter's value and importance. He knows that nothing in this world would ever compare with the joy and happiness and bliss that come by having devotion for Lord Ram and repeating his holy Name with love and faith. He knows that the while the best and the most charming attractions of the world are transient in nature and do not give any worthwhile joy, the holy Name of the Lord and his remembrance is a source of abiding bliss and blessedness.]

चौ०. अगुन सगुन दुइ ब्रह्म सरूपा । अकथ अगाध अनादि अनूपा ॥ १ ॥

मोरें मत बड़ नामु दुहु तें । किए जेहिं जुग निज बस निज बूतें ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

aguna saguna du'i brahma sarūpā. akatha agādha anādi anūpā. 1.

mōnrēm mata baṛa nāmu duhū tēm. ki'ē jēhim juga nija basa nija būtēm. 2.

The Supreme Being has two aspects—one is attributeless and unqualified aspect, and the other is a qualified aspect that has known attributes. The former is called ‘Nirguna’, and the latter is known as ‘Saguna’. Both these forms of the Lord are beyond words as they cannot be described; they are unreachable by the mind as they

are sublime and divine by nature; and they are peerless and unique in the sense that they have no beginning nor an end¹. (1)

In my (Tulsidas') view, Lord Ram's holy Name is greater and more powerful than both the above forms of the Supreme Being². [To wit, the holy Name of Lord Ram is far superior to and more important for a devotee than both the Saguna and the Nirguna forms of the Lord as it is easily accessible and helps to establish a bridge between the devotee and the Supreme Being who is extremely difficult to find and attain. The holy Name of the Lord helps the devotee to avoid getting confused and entangled in the maze of scriptural philosophies about which form of the Lord, the Saguna or the Nirguna, are best for one's spiritual objectives.]

In the current era of Kaliyug it has established its authority and glory by the virtue of its spiritual and mystical powers as well as its fame as being the most effective instrument that can provide a creature with liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation³. (2)

[¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 91—to Doha no. 92. Here, the greatness and majesty of Lord Ram and his form have been described. It is said that the glory of the Lord's name, form and stories are so astounding, vast and great that there is no comparison with anything else; no one can ever fathom them, even the scriptures have failed in this attempt. The Lord's glory is as fathomless and immeasurable as the ocean. So therefore, Lord Ram is compared to his own self, so say the Vedas!]

In Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 118 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it, Lord Shiva too reiterates this view that Lord Ram is a personified form of Brahm, the Supreme Being, and he is eternal, and without a beginning or an end.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line nos. 13-14 that precede Doha no. 113 where Indra, the king of Gods, has also expressed a similar idea while offering his prayers to Lord Ram. He says: "There are some who worship the Lord's invisible, all-pervading cosmic form known as Brahm, a form that has been praised and endorsed in the Vedas and other scriptures as the Lord's primary and truthful form. But howbeit, I find the Lord's visible manifestation as Lord Ram." ; —to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 6.

³This principle has already been explained as a note of Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 22 herein above.]

प्रौढ़ि सुजन जनि जानहिं जन की । कहउँ प्रतीति प्रीति रुचि मन की ॥ ३ ॥

एकु दारुगत देखिअ एकू । पावक सम जुग ब्रह्म बिबेकू ॥ ४ ॥

उभय अगम जुग सुगम नाम तें । कहेउँ नामु बड़ ब्रह्म राम तें ॥ ५ ॥

prauḍhi sujana jani jānahiṁ jana kī. kaha'um̐ pratīti prīti ruci mana kī. 3.
ēku dārugata dēkhi'a ēkū. pāvaka sama juga brahma bibēkū. 4.
ubhaya agama juga sugama nāma tēm̐. kahē'um̐ nāmu baṛa brahma rāma tēm̐. 5.

Elders should not take this assertion of mine as being a boastful sermon. What I (Tulsidas) am saying is out of my own conviction that comes out of my own personal experience and observation. I have firm faith in what I say, and my mind is convinced of its truth and authenticity. (30)

The two aspects of God (Nirguna and Saguna) are like to the two aspects of fire—one aspect of fire which is invisible and latent in wood (which is the Nirguna aspect standing for the invisible and cosmic form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm), and the other aspect that is visible to all of us (the Saguna aspect that stands for the Lord's manifestation on earth as Lord Ram). This is the real wisdom of which the wise men talk about. (4)

It is true that both the forms of the Lord (as Brahm, the Supreme Being, and Lord Ram, the former's manifested form) are difficult to access, but the holy Name of the Lord is easily accessible to one and all. And the best part is that the name helps one to have access to both the forms of the Lord.

That is why I (Tulsidas) say that the Lord's holy Name is greater and more important than either Brahm or Lord Ram himself¹. (5)

[¹The dilemma is that both Brahm and his manifested form are usually inaccessible to an ordinary seeker, whereas with this wisdom that the holy Name of the Lord is synonymous with the Lord, that the holy Name and the Lord are one, it is possible for everyone to have an easy access to the Lord. Hence Tulsidas asserts that the divine Name of the Lord is greater than the two aspects of God himself.

The formless aspect of the Lord is too abstract to be understood by an ordinary person and so the Lord goes out of his reach. The formed aspect of the Lord is limited to a specific era of time or place, and it is not possible for all to be physically present where the physical form of the Lord lives. But if one develops the wisdom that the holy Name of the Lord can be taken anywhere at any time and under any circumstance, and that the Name represents both the Nirguna Lord as well as the Saguna Lord, then the Lord becomes most easily accessible to him day and night.

When it is said that “the name helps to establish access to both the forms of the Lord, the Nirguna and the Saguna forms”, it is meant that the holy Name of the Lord can be used as a Mantra while meditating on Brahm and derive bliss and ecstasy of self-realisation as is done by ascetics (refer: Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 22 herein above), and it is used by devotees of all dispensations when they invoke Lord Ram by repeating his name to derive full benefit as if the Lord himself has come to bless them (refer: Chaupai line no. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 22 herein above).

Even a child can utter the word “RAM”. So it is extremely easy to use the holy Name of the Lord as a means to derive full spiritual benefits that are equivalent to having direct access to the Lord himself.

It has been said earlier that the name of the Lord acts as a bridge between the devotee and the Lord himself. Brahm had revealed himself in the form of Lord Ram ages ago in the era known as Tretayug, but even today a common man can feel the divine presence of the Lord just by remembering his holy Name with love, devotion and faith. Refer: Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 21 herein above.

It may not be possible for someone who is very dear to our heart to be always be with us at all times of the day in our lives, but when we hear that person's name his sweet memory immediately brings him close and makes his presence felt in a symbolic way. So is the case with Lord Ram—even though the Lord is not physically present today

with us, but if we call out his holy Name with due devotion and faith then his divine presence can be felt and experienced.]

व्यापकु एकु ब्रह्म अबिनासी । सत चेतन घन आनंद रासी ॥ ६ ॥
 अस प्रभु हृदयँ अछत अबिकारी । सकल जीव जग दीन दुखारी ॥ ७ ॥
 नाम निरूपन नाम जतन तें । सोउ प्रगटत जिमि मोल रतन तें ॥ ८ ॥

byāpaku ēku brahma abināsī. sata cētana ghana ānamda rāsī. 6.
 asa prabhu hṛdayam achata abikārī. sakala jīva jaga dīna dukhārī. 7.
 nāma nirūpana nāma jatana tēm. sō'u pragaṭata jimi mōla ratana tēm. 8.

Brahm, the Supreme Being, is eternal, attributeless and unqualified; he is all-pervading, universal and without a parallel. He is the supreme and absolute Truth, the pure Consciousness, and the center from where 'bliss' originates. (6)

Even though such a divine and holy Lord lives in everyone's heart as his Atma or soul (which is pure consciousness and an image of the cosmic Consciousness that Brahm represents)—it is such an irony and a pity that the people of this world are still miserable, tormented and unhappy. [It is because they do not realise that the Lord who is a fount of bliss and beatitude resides in their own heart, and not outside somewhere.] (7)

If Lord Ram's divine Name is evaluated properly like a jeweller evaluates a gem, it would dawn upon the seeker that it is like a priceless piece of jewel which can act as a panacea for all his worldly miseries and torments. [Just like a priceless piece of gem can make a man instantly wealthy and help him overcome all his financial difficulties, the name of the Lord can help him overcome all his worldly and spiritual problems, and give him everlasting peace and happiness. But it can only happen when he realises its importance and value.] (8)

दो०. निरगुन तें एहि भाँति बड़ नाम प्रभाउ अपार ।
 कहउँ नामु बड़ राम तें निज बिचार अनुसार ॥ २३ ॥

dōhā.

niraguna tēm ēhi bhāmṭi baṛa nāma prabhā'u apāra.
 kaha'um nāmu baṛa rāma tēm nija bicāra anusāra. 23.

I (Tulsidas) solemnly affirm that, in all sooth and without gainsay, Lord Ram's holy Name is far superior to the Nirguna (invisible, attributeless, unqualified, all-pervading and cosmic form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm).

Now, I shall tell you how the 'name' is greater than the divine incarnation of Brahm as Lord Ram. (Doha no. 23)

[In the verses that follow herein below, a comparison would be now made between the Nirguna aspect of the Supreme Being known as Brahm, and his Saguna

counterpart known as Lord Ram. And then finally it would be explained how and why the ‘name’ of the Lord is superior to both of them.

Refer also to: (a) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 21, and Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 23; (b) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 228.]

चौ०. राम भगत हित नर तनु धारी । सहि संकट किए साधु सुखारी ॥ १ ॥

नामु सप्रेम जपत अनयासा । भगत होहिं मुद मंगल बासा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

rāma bhagata hita nara tanu dhārī. sahi saṅkaṭa ki'ē sādhu sukhārī. 1.
nāmu saprēma japata anayāsā. bhagata hōhiṁ muda maṅgala bāsā. 2.

[In the verses that follow now, Tulsidas has emphasised the glory, the greatness and the spiritual importance of Lord Ram’s name that is holy and divine by comparing it with that of Lord Ram’s personal form and personal presence, and this comparison makes it obvious that while the physical form of Lord Ram has its own limitations and it benefited a limited numbers of devotees who lived during the period of the Lord’s manifestation on earth, but the Lord’s holy Name has an eternal presence as it transcends the limits of time and era, and has been providing protection, blessedness and spiritual rewards to countless devotees from time immemorial, and would continue to do so for eternity.

So whereas only a fortunate few could benefit from Lord Ram’s personal presence during his incarnation, the Lord’s holy Name is easily available to the living beings in all eras of time, the past, the presence and the future. As compared to the physical limitations of all sorts that the Supreme Being was subjected to in his form as Lord Ram by the virtue of his having to assume a body of a human being which inherently has many limitations, the holy Name of the Lord is free from all such inhibitions and limitations as it is in the form of a ‘sound’ that has no physical body that would impose any physical barriers or limitations upon it.

The holy Name of Lord Ram is like the cosmic sound of OM that is produced by the cosmic Consciousness that pervades and fills the entire space of creation; it can be pronounced at any time of the day and night by anyone and under any circumstance—and its spiritual rewards are there for all to have, without any discrimination. The holy Name of Lord Ram has been granting liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to all since time immemorial, is doing so now, and would continue to do so in the future as well.

To wit, in all sooth and without gainsay, while Lord Ram could bless only some fortunate ones who came in direct contact with him, the Lord’s holy Name touches the lives and souls of all living being in all phases of time and creation.

So therefore one deduces that the spiritual value of Lord Ram’s holy Name has far greater reach and far more importance than Lord Ram’s physical form itself.]

The Supreme Being (who is without a form) had assumed a human form as Lord Ram for the sake and the good of his devotees, and he had to suffer a lot in order to make those who were pious and saintly happy¹. (1)

On the other hand, when the devotees of the Lord repeat his holy Name with due love, faith, devotion and dedication, they unwittingly, even without being aware of it themselves, become an abode of abiding happiness and eternal joy because the Lord's glorious name is inherently and by its very nature a provider of blessedness, bliss, auspiciousness, beatitude and felicity of the best kind to one and all without any discrimination². (2)

[¹Lord Ram was a manifestation of Lord Vishnu, the cosmic form of the supreme Brahm. He had to assume the form of a human being and come down to earth when Mother Earth and the Gods prayed to him to do so to free the earth and protect its good inhabitants from the terror and horror unleashed by the demons who symbolised all hues of evil, sins, cruelty, tyranny, perversities et al one can ever imagine of.

This entire episode—why Lord Vishnu came down to earth in the form of Lord Ram—has been narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 176—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 189.

Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 13 where the saint-poet Tulsidas tells us that Lord Ram was actually a manifested and visible form of the Supreme Being who has a cosmic form that is invisible, all-pervading and all-encompassing; (ii) Doha no. 51 where Lord Shiva has endorsed this view himself while trying to convince his consort Sati about the glory and the divinity of Lord Ram; (b) Lanka Kand, Doha no. 72 where the saintly crow Kaagbhusund has reiterated the same point before Garud, the mount of Lord Vishnu who had approached the former to remove some doubts about Lord Ram's divinity and glories that had befuddled his mind.

²To wit, though the Supreme Being had to suffer great hardships himself when he took a visible form as Lord Ram, the Lord's divine Name is so grand, mystically powerful and divine that all those who say it or even remember it are freed from all sorts of sufferings and miseries in this world. They become a virtual treasury of bliss and happiness of a pristine kind.

The fact that Lord Ram had to undergo sufferings like an ordinary human being is clearly mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 211.

It was necessary for the Lord to undergo suffering like an ordinary man in order to conform to the Laws of Creation which the Supreme Lord had himself laid down—that all living beings who have a gross body are subjected to sufferings of some kind, and it is how a person deals with these sufferings and takes them in his stride, how he maintains his balance of mind and heart, how he adheres to and upholds the laws of righteousness, probity and propriety in the face of the greatest of challenges, how he remains calm and unruffled during the greatest of adversities and lows of life, how dispassionate and detached he is from the grossness of the material world and its emotional upheavals, and how in spite of his personal miseries and torments he gives warmth and love to all around him are some of the factors that would distinguish him from the rest. We find in the life of Lord Ram that all these and countless other such noble and glorious virtues were exemplified by him.]

राम एक तापस तिय तारी । नाम कोटि खल कुमति सुधारी ॥ ३ ॥

रिषि हित राम सुकेतुसुता की । सहित सेन सुत कीन्हि बिबाकी ॥ ४ ॥

सहित दोष दुख दास दुरासा । दलइ नामु जिमि रबि निसि नासा ॥ ५ ॥

rāma ēka tāpasa tiya tāri. nāma kōṭi khala kumati sudhārī. 3.
riṣi hita rāma sukētusutā kī. sahita sēna suta kīnhi bibākī. 4.
sahita dōṣa dukha dāsa durāsā. dala'i nāmu jimi rabi nisi nāsā. 5.

Lord Ram had redeemed a single woman (a reference to Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam who had turned into a stone due to a curse)¹, but his holy and divine Name (Ram, Rāma or Raam) corrected the fate and the spiritual destiny of millions of wicked souls². (3)

For the good of sage Viswamitra, Lord Ram had slayed a demonic woman named Tadka, who was a daughter of Suketu Yaksha, along with her son's army³. (4)

But Lord Ram's holy Name destroys a devotee's vain hopes arising out of worldly delusions that cause him immense grief, that torment him endlessly, and create sorrows for him, just like the rays or the light of the Sun destroys the darkness of night⁴. (5)

[¹This story is about Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam. Briefly it is as follows:

She was a devout and chaste wife of sage Gautam. According to legend, once it so happened that Indra, the lustful king of Gods, fell prey to the beauty of Ahilya, and attempted to outrage her modesty by assuming the form of her husband while the sage had gone out to the river to attend to his daily chores. When the sage returned, Indra tried to escape from the hermitage, but the sage caught him red-handed. So outraged was the sage that he cursed both his chaste wife Ahilya as well as the culprit Indra. He cursed Ahilya that she would become a stone. But when he found out that Indra, the king of Gods, was the real culprit who had deceitfully cheated his wife of her loyalty towards her husband, and that Ahilya was not to be blamed, the sage cursed Indra vehemently. Gautam realised that Indra had been so overcome with a rage of passion that he forgot all senses of ethics, propriety and probity and had assumed the form of the sage to cheat Ahilya. So the sage had then blessed her that when Lord Vishnu incarnated on the earth as Sri Ram, he would visit her place and would touch her with the holy dust of his feet, at which she will be absolved of her sins and her curse, and will resume her original form and come back to heaven. The sage promised her that after her penances and repentance, when she will be purified by Sri Ram's holy feet, he will accept her back as his wife.

Meanwhile, the sage vehemently cursed Indra that his body would be full of holes representing eyes, as he was so lascivious and promiscuous that he could see nothing but a woman's vagina, a virtual 'hole' in the body, with his lustful eyes, which were also equal to a 'hole'. So, let him see whatever he wishes with his whole body, and let the world know about his deformed mentality when it watches him with thousands of holes on his body. As a result, Indra's body became ugly by being perforated with thousands of tiny holes resembling the scars of Chicken-pox.

The story of Ahilya's liberation from her horrifying curse is this: When Lord Ram, accompanied by his brother Laxman, was on his way to Janakpur with sage Vishwamitra to attend the bow-breaking ceremony where later on he would marry Janka's daughter Sita, the Lord saw a rock or a boulder, perhaps shaped like a lady, lying alone and forlorn in an abandoned hermitage. This aroused the Lord's curiosity. When he enquired about it, the sage told him the story of Ahilya and how she became a stone. The sage asked Lords Ram to be gracious upon her and free her from her

torments by removing the curse by touching her with the dust of his holy feet. As soon as the Lord touched that rock with his foot, Ahilya was revived. She had tears rolling down her eyes, and with a bowed head and heart overflowing with gratitude and joy she offered her prayers and obeisance to Lord Ram. Then she went back to heaven to be reunited with her husband, sage Gautam.

This story of Ahilya's liberation is narrated by Goswami Tulsidas in—(a) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha 211; (b) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 57-60; (c) Janki Mangal, verse nos. 39-40; (d) Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, Baal Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 19-61; and (e) Valmiki's Ramayan, Baal Kand, from Sarga/Canto 48, verse nos. 14-33—to Sarga/Canto 49, verse nos. 1-21.

²To wit, the holy Name of Lord Ram is so pure and mystically powerful that it provides liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to countless creatures. The mere utterance of the holy Name of the Lord frees all the living beings from their wickedness, and if they regularly invoke it then their entire being becomes pure and holy as those of saints and pious people.

³When sage Vishwamitra was returning to his hermitage with Lord Ram and his brother Laxman, he was attacked by a demoness named Tadka. Lord Ram slayed her with a single arrow. This event is mentioned in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-6 that precede Doha no. 209.

Then when the sage got engaged in his fire sacrifice, Lord Ram and Laxman stood guard. At that time, a huge army of demons led by Marich and Subahu, who were kin of Tadka, attacked. They were led by Marich and Subahu. In the battle that followed, Lord Ram and Laxman eliminated all the demons, but Marich was shot by a head-less arrow of Lord Ram that did not kill him but flung him to a remote island in the middle of the ocean. In this way, Lord Ram provided joy to sage Vishwamitra and other sages by helping them complete their fire sacrifice. This event is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 210.

⁴The darkness of the night is compared to the many fears that torment a creature in this world, and Lord Ram's holy Name is likened to the sunlight that instantly removes this darkness. To wit, Lord Ram's holy Name removes all the fears that cause immense and endless distress to a devotee, and it assures him of constant protection throughout his life.]

भंजेउ राम आपु भव चापू । भव भय भंजन नाम प्रतापू ॥ ६ ॥

दंडक बनू प्रभु कीन्ह सुहावन । जन मन अमित नाम किए पावन ॥ ७ ॥

निसिचर निकर दले रघुनंदन । नामु सकल कलि कलुष निकंदन ॥ ८ ॥

bhañjē'u rāma āpu bhava cāpū. bhava bhaya bhañjana nāma pratāpū. 6.
daṇḍaka banu prabhu kīnha suhāvana. jana mana amita nāma ki'ē pāvana. 7.
nīsicara nikara dalē raghunandana. nāmu sakala kali kaluṣa nikandana. 8.

Lord Ram broke the Bow of Lord Shiva¹, but his divine Name breaks the dread of rebirth of his devotees. (6)

Lord Ram transformed only one inhospitable forest called Dandaka into one that was full of charm and beauty², whereas his divine Name has purified the minds of numerous devotees and made them glorious and praiseworthy. (7)

The son (i.e. Lord Ram) who born in the line of glorious Kings of the Raghu Dynasty of the kingdom of Ayodhya (raghunandana) had crushed only a handful of demons³, but his powerful Name crushes all the sorrows, pains, miseries and torments during the era of Kali (which is rich in negativity and its accompanying pains and miseries). (8)

[¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede Doha no. 210; and (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 240—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 6.—to Doha no. 264.

Briefly, the story is this: The King of Janakpur was known as Janak, and he had a daughter named Sita. He had in his custody an ancient bow that was kept by Lord Shiva with his ancestors generations ago. That bow had become fragile and useless even for Lord Shiva, and was of no use for Janak either. But it was formidable and strong and heavy nonetheless as it belonged the Shiva. So in order to judge who is the strongest, the most powerful and courageous man in this world whom he could pick to be his daughter's groom, Janak decided that whosoever broke this bow would marry Sita. So he declared a 'Bow Breaking Ceremony' in which all the great princes, kings and warriors of that era were invited. Some came by invitation, and some came on their own to try their luck, as everyone had heard of Sita's matchless beauty and charm. In the competition that followed, no one could as much as move the great bow an inch, what to talk of lifting and breaking it. By-and-by, Lord Ram broke the bow and married Sita.

²During his stay in the forest, Lord Ram had spent some time in the most inhospitable part of it that was called Dandak. It was cursed by sage Sukracharya, and so it became barren. Lord Ram lived here on the banks of river Godavari at a place that was green and had large trees of five kinds, giving it the name of Panchavati—the 'garden of five trees'. Here, Lord Ram had met the old king of birds known as Jatayu, and he had blessed the many sages and hermits who lived here in seclusion to carry on with their spiritual objectives undisturbed by the hustle and bustle of the populated parts of the world. The Lord's presence in this otherwise barren part of the forest had transmuted it into a verdant and vibrant forest full of greenery and fruit bearing trees. The Lord's holy presence had also blessed the sages and hermits who dwelled there. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 16 that precedes Doha no. 13—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 14.

It was here in the Dandak forest that the demoness named Supernakha had tried to play fools with Lord Ram by assuming the form of a beautiful lady and lure him to marry her. At this pervert, sinful and unrighteous move of her, the Lord had got her nose and ears chopped off by Laxman. This event ultimately led to the abduction of Sita by the demon king Ravana, and the ruinous war of Lanka.

³When Supernakha was deformed, her cousin brothers Khar and Dushan had attacked Lord Ram with a huge army of demons to take revenge. The Lord had slayed them all then. Besides these demons there were many more who were slayed by the Lord personally. So this verse means that while it is true that Lord Ram had personally

eliminated many demons representing evil, vile and sinful forces in the world, it is the Lord's holy Name that takes the trophy and the glory because it has been continuously eliminating countless such symbolic demons down the ages and providing delight and happiness to devotees by eliminating their fears and miseries in this world.]

दो०. सबरी गीध सुसेवकनि सुगति दीन्हि रघुनाथ ।

नाम उधारे अमित खल बेद बिदित गुन गाथ ॥ २४ ॥

dōhā.

sabarī gīdha susēvakani sugati dīnhi raghunātha.

nāma udhārē amita khala bēda bidita guna gātha. 24.

Raghu-Nath (the Lord of king Raghu's dynasty; Lord Ram) gave immortality to only a few faithful devotees of his, such as Sabari (the old woman)¹ and Giddha (a vulture called Jatau)², whereas the Lord's holy Name has delivered, liberated and provided salvation and emancipation to numerous lowly creatures who had no hope of ever getting delivered from their miserable lives—a fact that is well known and lauded even by the Vedas which sing (extol and repeatedly stress) the greatness and the glory of the holy Name of Lord Ram. (Doha no. 24)

[¹Lord Ram had provided liberation and deliverance to an old, low-caste lady named Sabari (or Shabari) who lived alone in the forest and was eagerly waiting for the Lord's arrival. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Doha no. 36.

Her story in brief is this: According to the story of Ramayana, Shabari was a woman belonging to a forest tribe called 'Shabari'. This tribe was classified as Shudras or lower caste, and sustained themselves by collecting and selling honey and fruits from the forest trees. Being of a low caste, she is said have been ostracized by others. She served a sage named Matanga very devotedly. The sage was a realised soul, and so pleased was he with her devotion and service that he blessed her at the time of leaving his body that she would find her emancipation and salvation when Lord Ram visits her while searching for Sita. Like her Guru, Shabari too left her mortal body after having the privilege of meeting and worshipping the Lord in person by lighting the pyre herself with her mystical powers. According to Adhyatma Ramayana of sage Veda Vyas, it was Lord Ram who had performed her last rites himself, a rare privilege that was even denied to his own worldly father Dasrath.

Shabari used to live in the hermitage where earlier sage Matanga lived. This hermitage was near Mount Rishyamook where Sugriv, the exiled younger brother of the king of monkeys Baali, lived with his close confidantes Hanuman, Jamvant, Naal and Neel etc. This place was about ten Yojans or eighty miles from Kishkindha, the capital of the forest kingdom of which Baali was the king.

There is a story about Lake Pampa on the banks of which she lived. The great sage Matang had his hermitage here. Shabari used to get up very early and clean the path around this lake before her Guru went there for his daily bath and other chores. It so happened that one day, the sages and seers who lived in that area saw her cleaning the path leading to the lake very early in the morning. Since she was of a low caste, they cursed and scolded her because they regarded her appearance as defiling the place. This misplaced notion of superiority and high stature immensely displeased the

Lord. So as soon as those haughty and proud sages went and took a dip in that lake, its water turned turbid, polluted and infested by warms and filth. When Sri Ram had gone there during his forest exile, the sages and seers requested him to purify that lake. Sri Ram, being all-knowing, knew the secret behind that pollution, and in order to teach those sages a lesson of their lives, he asked them to request Sabari to take a dip in it. As soon as she did it, the water regained its former pristine purity, and the lake its former exceptional scenic beauty. This made the haughty sages and seers feel ashamed at their ignorance and behaviour.

Lord Sri Ram had visited her hermitage and enjoyed the fruits offered by her just like he would have enjoyed them if they were given to him by his mother. In the ‘Ram-Sarawali of Surdas’, verse no. 11, it is said that ‘Sabari was a long time ardent devotee and a humble follower of Raghupati (Sri Ram). He accepted and ate fruits offered by her, preached her on the concept of complete devotion, and then liberated her by giving her residence in his own abode.’

It was Shabari who had advised Sri Ram to go towards the Rishyamook mountain and make friends with Sugriv, the monkey king, who in turn would help the Lord in finding out Sita and freeing her from the clutches of her captors.

²Jatau was the king of vultures. He was befriended by Lord Ram when the Lord was passing through the Dandak forest. Jatau was a friend of Dasrath, the worldly father of Lord Ram, and he had assured the Lord that he will stay in close proximity to them (Ram, Sita and Laxman) in the forest to keep a vigilant eye and give them protection to the best of his might—this is narrated in the *Adhyatma Ramayan* of sage Veda Vyas, *Aranya Kand*, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-7. This fact is also endorsed by Tulsidas in *Geetawali*, *Aranya Kand*, verse no. 12, stanza no. 2.

True to his word, Jatau had fought valiantly with the demon king Ravana when the latter was taking Sita on his chariot to Lanka after abducting her. He was mortally wounded as Ravana cut off his wings. So Jatau fell to the ground and waited for Lord Ram’s arrival. By-and-by the Lord came there and was told by Jatau about Ravana taking Sita away. Jatau died in the arms of Lord Ram, a death no one’s been fortunate ever to have. The Lord performed his last rites just as a son does for his own father. Thus, Jatau was granted liberation and deliverance by the Lord. These episodes are narrated in *Ram Charit Manas*, *Aranya Kand*, (i) Doha no. 13; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 33.

The glorious way that Jatau died has been lauded and applauded by Tulsidas in *Dohawali* verse nos. 222-227. Refer also to *Geetawali*, *Aranya Kand*, verse nos. 12-16.

“Lord Ram lifted Jatau onto his lap and washed his wounds with the tears streaming from his (Ram’s) eyes”—this is said in *Geetawali*, *Aranya Kand*, verse no. 13, stanza no. 1, while *Ram Charit Manas*, *Aranya Kand*, Doha no. 30 says that “the Lord moved his loving hand caressingly on his head”.

Jatau’s special death which made him a subject of jealousy and envy for all other exalted persons as narrated in the Doha above has one unique aspect—in spite of him being a vulture by birth and body, he was given an honour befitting a father by none else than the Supreme Being (Lord Ram) himself when the Lord performed his last rites himself—refer: (i) *Geetawali*, *Aranya Kand*, verse no. 16, stanza no. 4; verse no. 14, stanza no. 1; (ii) *Ram Charit Manas*, *Aranya Kand*, Doha no. 32; (iii) *Kavitawali*, *Uttar Kand*, verse no. 16, line no. 3; (iv) Doha no. 227 of *Dohawali*; (v) *Vinai Patrika*, verse no. 164, stanza no. 2; verse no. 138, stanza no. 3, line no. 1.

Vinai Patrika, verse no. 138, stanza no. 3, line no. 1 says that Lord Ram offered a ‘Pinda’, a ball of cereals that is offered to the soul of one’s departed parent, to Jatau after the bird left its physical body.]

चौ०. राम सुकंठ बिभीषन दोऊ । राखे सरन जान सबु कोऊ ॥ १ ॥

नाम गरीब अनेक नेवाजे । लोक बेद बर बिरिद बिराजे ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

rāma sukaṇṭha bibhīṣana dō'ū. rākhē sarana jāna sabu kō'ū. 1.

nāma garība anēka nēvājē. lōka bēda bara birida birājē. 2.

As is well known to all, Lord Ram gave refuse to and restored the self-respect and dignity of only two persons by helping them to get back the kingdoms from which they were ousted by their respective elder brothers—one was Sugriva (the heir to the monkey kingdom, and brother of Baali)¹, and the other was Vibhishan (the brother of Ravana, the king of the demons)². (1)

On the other hand, the Lord’s divine and holy Name has given protection, succour and solace to numerous humble and poor souls from time immemorial. This glory is well known and well established in the world as well as in the Vedas³. (2)

[¹Sugriv, the monkey prince, had a well-formed and attractive neck, and hence got the name “sukaṇṭha”. We read in the story of the Ramayana that Sugriv, the monkey prince, was beaten, disinherited and thrown into exile by his elder brother Baali, the monkey king, due to some misunderstanding between the two. Sugriv was so terrified of Baali who was baying for his blood that he escaped to the summit of a mountain called Rishyamook along with his trusted aides, and lived a sorrowful life in hiding. When Lord Ram was wandering in the forest in search of Sita, his wife who was abducted by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, he passed that way. By-and-by, the Lord and Sugriv struck a bond of friendship, and the Lord promised him to restore his lost dignity and right to the kingdom of Kishkindha, the monkey kingdom, from which he was disinherited. In return, Sugriv promised the Lord that he would do all he can to help the Lord find Sita and recover her, even if that meant a war with Sita’s abductor. To keep his part of the bargain, Lord Ram had slayed Baali and restored Sugriv to the throne of Kishkindha.

The full story of Baali and Sugriv is narrated in detail in (i) sage Veda Vyas’ Adhyatma Ramayan, Uttarkand, Canto 3; (ii) Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand (Chapter), Sarga (Canto) 13, verse no. 140-152; and (iii) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 11.

The full story is this: Sugriv and Baali were two brothers, Baali being the elder of the two siblings. They were the rulers of the monkey race and had their capital at Kishkindha. Once, a demon named Dundhubhi came to challenge Baali for a duel. Baali killed him and flung his dead body on the mountain called Rishyamook. Blood of the demon sprayed in all the directions, and this blood defiled a hermitage of a sage who lived on this mountain. So he cursed that if Baali ever came in that place he would die. It was out of this fear that Baali never came near Mt. Rishyamook.

Earlier, the two brothers had very cordial relations. Once a demon named Maayaawi, the son of Maye, came to Kishkindha and challenged Baali. When Baali

rushed towards him, the demon fled and hid inside a cave. Baali pursued him inside, but while entering the cave he told his younger brother Sugriv to guard the mouth of the cave and wait for him for at least a fortnight. Sugriv waited for one full month, but Baali did not come back. At the end of this period blood started seeping out of the mouth of the cave. Thinking that the demon has killed his brother and would come out to kill him also, Sugriv covered the mouth of the cave with a huge boulder and fled from there. When he returned to Kishkindha, the courtiers had no choice but to anoint him as the king in place of his brother whom they all thought was killed by the demon.

Meanwhile it so happened that the blood that had seeped out of the cave's mouth was that of the demon who was killed by Baali. When Baali came out, he did not find Sugriv, and to make matters worse he found the mouth of the cave closed by a heavy boulder. When he came back to Kishkindha he found Sugriv on the throne. Naturally of course he went mad with anger, and beat his brother mercilessly. Sugriv, though not at all at fault, tried his best to explain the situation to Baali, but the seed of misunderstanding and animosity was already sown, and seeing no way out, Sugriv fled with his life. Baali usurped the kingdom and the wife of Sugriv forcibly. Sugriv was so terrified of Baali who was baying for his blood that he escaped to the summit of a mountain called Rishyamook along with his trusted aides, and lived a forlorn and sorrowful life in hiding, because he knew that Baali would never come to harm him here because of the sage's earlier curse.

The story goes that on some previous occasion Baali had collected seven fruits of the coconut tree and kept them on the ground to take bath in the lake known as Pampaa. When he returned he found that a huge python was sitting on these seven fruits. This was tantamount to defiling the fruits and so Baali cursed the serpent that the seven fruits would pierce his body and grow into tall trees. When the mother of the serpent came to know of this curse, she also cursed Baali that anyone who would cut these seven coconut trees with a single arrow would be the one who would also kill him.

When Lord Ram was wandering in the forest in search of Sita, his wife who was abducted by Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, he passed that way. By-and-by, the Lord and Sugriv struck a bond of friendship, and the Lord promised him to restore his lost dignity and right to the kingdom of Kishkindha, the monkey kingdom, from which he was disinherited. In return, Sugriv promised the Lord that he would do all he can to help the Lord find Sita and recover her, even if that meant a war with Sita's abductor.

Sugriv knew about the secret of the seven coconut trees. As he wished to be sure that Lord Ram was indeed capable to restore him to the throne of Kishkindha by eliminating Baali, and that the things wouldn't go out of hands and make life further tormenting for him, Sugriv asked the Lord to fell these seven tall coconut trees with a single arrow. So when Lord Sri Ram felled the seven trees with an arrow, Sugriv knew that the Lord would indeed be able to kill his arch enemy Baali.

With Lord Sri Ram's patronage and support, Sugriv went and challenged his elder brother Baali for a duel. Baali was absolutely stunned, as he had never expected Sugriv to ever have enough courage and strength to challenge him like this. His wife Taaraa also tried to dissuade him by pointing out that Sugriv has the support of Lord Sri Ram who is the Supreme Being incarnate, but Baali was wiser because he decided that either way he was the winner. If he managed to eliminate Sugriv then he would get rid of this constant nuisance of a brother, and if he gets killed at the hands of Lord Sri Ram then also he will be lucky as his emancipation and salvation was absolutely

sure. Where, he thought to himself, will he get such an opportunity again in life. In the first bout, Sugriv got bruised and beaten badly. He limped back to Sri Ram and complained bitterly. The Lord replied that he did not shoot Baali because the two brothers looked exactly alike and he could not distinguish between them. There was a hidden message in this statement—the Lord wished to convey to Sugriv that for him all the creatures are alike. But at the same time he had to keep the words he had given to Sugriv that he would eliminate his enemy Baali. So the Lord put a garland around his neck, purportedly to identify him but actually to finally warn Baali that the victory of Sugriv is decided, and if he wants to save himself then he must make a truce. This time around too, Baali beat Sugriv black and blue. The Lord was watching the proceedings from behind a tree. When the situation became worst and Sugriv was about to be knocked down, the Lord shot an arrow that hit Baali and he fell down.

It is said that Lord Sri Ram had to shoot Baali from hiding because the latter had a boon which said that half of the enemy's strength would pass on to Baali if the enemy is within his sight. Nevertheless, Baali felt privileged that the Lord of the world has himself killed him and given his soul the chance of finding liberation and deliverance from the fetters of the gross body of a monkey. At the time of death, Baali put his son Angad in the Lord's custody. This showed that Baali was extremely prudent and wise. By entrusting the conqueror Ram with the safety and security of his son Angad he ensured that Angad would be safe from any kind of evil design of his uncle Sugriv who would now never try to kill him overtly or covertly.

Besides this thing of the Lord giving Sugriv his word to kill his enemy and undo the grave injustice done to him and restore his dignity and right to the kingdom, there was another very important reason why Baali had to be eliminated. On some previous occasion a reciprocal military pact was made between Baali and Ravana that essentially said that they would not allow their respective territories to be used to launch an attack on the other, and also that they would come to each others aid should either of them is called to do so. The story is that once Baali had put Ravana under his armpit for many days while the latter had gone to challenge the former when he was doing some worship. Peeved by Ravana's arrogance and impertinence, Baali had tucked him under his arms to stop him from annoying him any further. When his worship was finished and he had returned back to his capital at Kishkindha, he realised that Ravana was still squeezed under his armpit. So he released the latter and made a pact of friendship with him. This story is narrated in *Anand Ramayan*, Saar Kanda (Chapter 1), Sarga (Canto) 13, verse nos. 96-101.

Since Lord Sri Ram needed to cross the territory of Kishkindha and also take the help of the army of this place to launch an assault on Lanka it was militarily wise and prudent to eliminate the foe in the backyard.

But the Lord knew the constraints under which he had to eliminate Baali though the latter had not offended the Lord in any manner whatsoever. The Lord was well aware of his responsibilities towards Angad and he wished to rectify this apparent biased action of his of killing Baali at the behest of Sugriv—so he ensured that the final right to the kingdom of Kishkindha went to the heir of Baali, instead of the heir of Sugriv, by appointing Angad as the heir-apparent or the prince regent, and declaring that though Sugriv was made the king of Kishkindha upon Baali's death it was Angad who would succeed to the throne after Sugriv instead of any direct descendent of Sugriv such as his own son.

²Vibhishan was the younger brother of Ravana, the king of the demon race and the one who had abducted Sita. When Lord Ram launched a campaign to retrieve Sita

from his clutches and a ruinous war loomed on the horizon, many of Ravana's ministers and councillors tried to persuade him to give Sita back to the Lord and avoid total destruction. But by the fiat of fate had shrouded Ravana's wisdom in a thick veil of dooms-day darkness so much that he had become excessively stubborn and unamenable and so much deluded about his own invincibility, strength and powers that it wasn't no good trying to make him see reason and act with prudence as he wasn't ready to lend his ears to nobody who dared to give him any sane advice that was against what he wished to hear; he would listen to no nothing. He wasn't to blame for it for the hungry god-of-death had already bared his teeth for him. One such well-wishing advisor of his was Visbhishan, his own brother. But instead of facing harsh reality, Ravana was got so angry at his brother that he kicked him in full court and told him to get out immediately. Fearing for his life and smarting from grave insult, Vibhishan left Lanka and came to Lord Ram to seek refuge with him. The Lord of course graciously granted him refuge, promising him not only fearlessness from his arch enemy Ravana but also the throne of Lanka after the war.

This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.

³A similar idea—that the glory and divinity of Lord Ram's holy Name is well known throughout the world and well established in the Vedas, the ancient scripture—has also been expressed in Doha no. 24 herein above. Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Doha no. 51 where Lord Shiva has affirmed this point in an unequivocal term.

The point being stressed here is that while Lord Ram was personally able to restore the dignity and self-respect of only some selected individuals, such as Sugriv and Vibhishan in this particular case, and had granted them fearlessness from their tormentors, the holy Name of the Lord has been doing it for ages and from time immemorial for countless creatures all over the world.]

राम भालु कपि कटकु बटोरा । सेतु हेतु श्रमु कीन्ह न थोरा ॥ ३ ॥
नामु लेत भवसिंधु सुखाहीं । करहु बिचारु सुजन मन माहीं ॥ ४ ॥

rāma bhālu kapi kaṭaku baṭōrā. sētu hētu śramu kīnha na thōrā. 3.
nāmu lēta bhavasindhu sukhāhīm. karahu bicāru sujana mana māhīm. 4.

Lord Ram had collected an army of bears and monkeys, and took a lot of trouble to construct a bridge across the ocean (to cross over to Sri Lanka to fight and bring back Sita from the clutches of demon Ravana)¹. (3)

But mere pronouncing Lord's holy Name is enough to dry-up the ocean represented by all the entanglements of this mundane, gross, delusory and dreary world. So oh wise men, think this over in your mind and ponder over it's significance². (4)

[¹The story of Lord Ram constructing the mighty bridge across the ocean to reach the shores of Lanka is narrated in all the versions of the story of the Ramayana. Presently we will refer only to Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas where we read about it in Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 60—to Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 5.

²This verse stresses that Lord Ram's holy Name helps a creature to easily cross this formidable world of transmigration, a world that is compared to the mighty and monstrous ocean because it is almost impossible to cross it, and more often than not this monster drowned people who dared to challenge it. But the glory of the holy Name of Lord Ram is such that with the help of it a creature can easily and as comfortably get across as if one was walking over a bridge. To wit, Lord Ram's holy Name makes a creature fearless in the face of the horrors of this world of birth and death, and it assures the creature that the future of his soul is secured. If a creature takes the help of the Lord's holy Name then he can easily find liberation and deliverance for himself; his soul would certainly and without gainsay attain emancipation and salvation. It would be as easy for a creature as walking across a bridge to reach the other side of an ocean, without being subjected to a bumpy ride on a boat, no matter how sturdy it may be, a-tossing, a-joggling, a-wobbling and a-stumbling, spinning, heaving and plunging so fiercely on the waves in order to cross a choppy ocean represented by this mundane, gross world of transmigration.

Lord Ram's holy Name would make this journey-of-life very peaceful and joyful for a devotee who would be at ease during his life in this world as he is assured of an all-round protection offered by the shield of the Lord's holy Name, and he is also assured of eternal peace and beatitude in the world hereafter as Lord Ram's divine Name would ensure of his soul's emancipation and salvation and eternal rest.

This verse essentially says that though there are many other means to attain liberation and deliverance as advised in the scriptures, such as doing Tapa (penance, austerity), Yoga (meditation), Dhyan (contemplation), Japa (repetition of holy Mantras), Daan (making charity), Yagya (fire and other religious sacrifices), Vrat (keeping fast and observing many vows and sacraments) and so on and so forth, but the most comfortable and easy path is that of Lord Ram's holy Name, for all other paths are strenuous and cumbersome, and they are rife with countless hurdles and problems that create a lot of uncertainty and trouble for the creature.]

राम सकुल रन रावनु मारा । सीय सहित निज पुर पगु धारा ॥ ५ ॥

राजा रामु अवध रजधानी । गावत गुन सुर मुनि बर बानी ॥ ६ ॥

rāma sakula rana rāvanu mārā. sīya sahita nija pura pagu dhārā. 5.

rājā rāmu avadha rajadhānī. gāvata guna sura muni bara bānī. 6.

Lord Ram had killed Ravana and his entire clan (except Vivhishan), and then returned to his capital Ayodhya along with Sita. (5)

He then was anointed as the King of Ayodhya with Sita as the Queen, while gods and sages sung his praises, virtues and glories in best of terms. (6)

[These events are narrated in full in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, from Doha no. 102—to Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 15.]

सेवक सुमिरत नामु सप्रीती । बिनु श्रम प्रबल मोह दलु जीती ॥ ७ ॥

फिरत सनेहँ मगन सुख अपनै । नाम प्रसाद सोच नहिं सपनै ॥ ८ ॥

sēvaka sumirata nāmu saprītī. binu śrama prabala mōha dalu jītī. 7.
phirata sanēham magana sukha apanēm. nāma prasāda sōca nahir
sapanēm. 8.

As compared to this, the Lord's devotees and followers are able to conquer an army of faults and delusions (known as Maya) without exertion simply by remembering the holy Name of the Lord with love and devotion. [To wit, while Lord Ram had to gather a huge army and wage a ferocious and strenuous war to eliminate the sinful and evil demons who were terrifying the world, the Lord's holy Name enables his devotees to overcome all their fears, sins and faults most easily and effortlessly.] (7)

These devotees of the Lord roam around cheerfully and fearlessly, absorbed in the thoughts of the Lord, and deeply immersed in the ocean of bliss that comes with having devotion for the Lord. By doing this, they derive immense joy, happiness and beatitude. They are not worried about anything even in their dreams, thanks to the glory and the grace of Lord Ram's holy Name. (8)

दो०. ब्रह्म राम तें नामु बड़ बर दायक बर दानि ।

रामचरित सत कोटि महँ लिय महेस जियँ जानि ॥ २५ ॥

dōhā.

brahma rāma tēm nāmu baṛa bara dāyaka bara dāni.
rāmacarita sata kōṭi maham liya mahēsa jiyam jāni. 25.

So therefore we conclude that the divine and the holy Name of Lord Ram is greater and superior than Brahm (the Absolute and Supreme Being) himself (because Brahm had manifested in the form of Lord Ram).

The Lord's holy Name bestows blessings and grants boons even to those exalted souls who themselves are capable of granting boons and blessing others. [This refers to the great gods as well as the sages, hermits and saints who can bless others and grant boons to them. To wit, these gods, sages, hermits and saints and et al derive their mystical powers relying on the strength of Lord Ram's holy Name. The Name of the Lord empowers them to do so; they derive their authority and power by the virtue of their invoking and using the Lord's holy Name while granting boons and blessings.]

Wise as he was, Lord Shiva selected these two syllables (Ra and Ma that form the divine name of the Lord as 'RAM') out of the one hundred million verses comprising the story of Lord Ram¹. [To wit, out of so many choices and options available to Shiva, he selected these two letters as the easiest means to attain one's spiritual goal as well as to obtain whatever one desires in this world. When these two letters were joined by him, they formed the word 'Ram'. So this became the Mantra which Shiva repeats constantly and consistently, and consequentially he has found eternal bliss and tranquility. Not only this, he became renowned as the wisest amongst the pantheon of Gods.] (Doha no. 25)

[¹Refer: Barvai Ramayan, Uttar Kand, verse no. 56.

The idea is that Lord Ram's name RAM ('Rāma' or 'Raam') is very divine and holy. It is not an ordinary name, but more powerful than any other Mantra (spiritual formula) advised in the scriptures. Its glory and majesty has been extolled and endorsed by the Vedas themselves as clearly mentioned herein above in Doha no. 24 and Chaupai line no. 2 that follows it.]

मासपारायण, पहला विश्राम
(māsapārāyaṇa, pahalā viśrāma)

[This is the point where a pause, the first such, is made if this Holy Book 'Ram Charit Manas' is recited for a whole month.]

चौ०. नाम प्रसाद संभु अबिनासी । साजु अमंगल मंगल रासी ॥ १ ॥
सुक सनकादि सिद्ध मुनि जोगी । नाम प्रसाद ब्रह्मसुख भोगी ॥ २ ॥
caupāī.

nāma prasāda sambhu abināsi. sāju amaṅgala maṅgala rāsi. 1.
suka sanakādi sid'dha muni jōgī. nāma prasāda brahmasukha bhōgī. 2.

[In the following verses, a lot many instances are cited where well-known devotees of the Lord had attained blessedness and beatitude as well fame and an exalted stature by invoking the holy Name of Lord Ram. These instances are employed to lend support to the advice given in earlier verses about the greatness and the glory, the importance and the value, the effectiveness and the surety of employing Lord Ram's holy Name as a wonderful and mystically empowered sure-shot formula that can help a person to attain his spiritual objectives. The Lord's holy Name is richly endowed with all auspiciousness, blissfulness, blessedness, beatitude and felicity.]

By the grace of Lord Ram's holy and auspicious Name, Lord Shiva has become immortal. And inspite of having inauspicious and ominous forms of paraphernalia on his body (such as having serpents wrapped all around his body, wearing a wreath of skulls around his neck, and having ash smeared all over his almost naked body), he has become a treasury of the best of spiritual glories, values, blessings and auspiciousness¹. (1)

The glory of the holy Name of Lord Ram is such that all those who have attained true bliss and beatitude, such as the sages Suka, Sankadi etc., and other such sages and yogis (mystics) who enjoy the supreme joy which comes with the blissful state of self and Brahm realisation—all of them have attained it due to the grace of Lord Ram's auspicious Name which is holy and divine². (2)

[¹In the Hindu pantheon of Gods, Lord Shiva occupies the most exalted place of honour. He is one of the Gods of the Trinity, and is revered and honoured by all the other Gods for his mysticism, wisdom and enlightenment. Lord Ram, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the second God of the Trinity and deemed to be a personified form of the Supreme Being, has himself said that if a person wishes to have devotion for

him and attain beatitude and felicity of self-realisation and Brahm-realisation, then it is obligatory for the aspirant to worship Lord Shiva first as he is very dear to Lord Ram. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (i) Lanka Kand, Doha no. 2 along with Chaupai line nos. 6-8 that precede it; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 45.

It is also Lord Ram's declaration that his devotion is granted by those who worship and pay obeisance to Lord Shiva—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 3.

Lord Shiva's external appearances that look very horrifying on their face value are very misleading, for the Lord actually is a great mystic, an Yogi par-excellence, one who is a treasury of holiness, auspiciousness, divinity and spirituality. He has assumed this unconventional attire of being wrapped in serpents, having ash all over his body and wearing a garland of skulls just to keep at bay and dissuade those who are not true devotees and not sincere in their spiritual pursuit, and worship Lord Shiva only to fulfill their worldly desires. The Lord abhors them for he hates deceit and conceit in his devotees, and nor does he like selfish ones who pretend to worship the Lord but it is only to fulfill some worldly aspirations.

Lord Shiva's most odd external appearance has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 92.

²All the great sages and mystics have unanimously declared that they have attained the state of eternal blissfulness and beatitude by relying upon the holy Name of Lord Ram. To wit, the Lord's holy Name is the formula that all self-realised and enlightened souls who have attained bliss, beatitude and felicity have employed to attain this exalted and eclectic state of being.]

नारद जानेउ नाम प्रतापू । जग प्रिय हरि हरि हर प्रिय आपू ॥ ३ ॥
नामु जपत प्रभु कीन्ह प्रसादू । भगत सिरोमनि भे प्रह्लादू ॥ ४ ॥

nārada jānē'u nāma pratāpū. jaga priya hari hari hara priya āpū. 3.
nāmu japata prabhu kīnha prasādū. bhagata sirōmani bhē prahalādū. 4.

Sage Narad knows the glory, the power and the importance of the holy Name of Lord Ram. That is why while the world loves Sri Hari (Vishnu), and Lord Shiva (Har) is dear to Hari (Vishnu), sage Narad is loved by both Har and Hari¹. (3)

By the grace of Lord Ram's holy Name, Prahalad² became a jewel (i.e. most honoured and respected one) amongst the devotees of the Lord (and he was freed from the fear of his demonic father who was ready to kill him). (4)

[¹Sage Narad constantly repeats the holy Name of the Lord, and wherever he goes he announces his arrival by saying aloud 'Hari Hari'. The word immediately gives him recognition and invites great respect. He is welcomed everywhere, even by the demons who are otherwise inimical towards Lord Vishnu, one of whose names is 'Hari'. This is because the demons realise that Narad is shielded by a very powerful shield of the Lord's holy Name, and he is invoking the Supreme Being who is the supreme Lord of creation, and therefore of the demons also. Narad has been blessed with the boon of having access to all parts of creation precisely on the strength of the

Lord's Name because he goes everywhere chanting the Name. It opens the door for him in all the directions of creation as if it were a magical charm that opens all doors and removes all obstacles.

Lord Shiva's other name is 'Har'. It literally means 'one who steals or removes all evil and sins as well as all worldly attachments and delusions from his devotees'. This paves the way for the devotees' liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

Lord Shiva is famed as the God who chants Lord Ram's holy Name constantly without fail, and he always remains in a state of quiet meditation even when appearing not to be so. Lord Shiva uses Lord Ram's holy Name as an exclusive spiritual formula for doing Japa (repetition of a holy Mantra) and Dhyan (contemplation) during Yoga (meditation). Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19; Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 58; Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 60; Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108.

²Prahalad was a young boy who had meditated by repeating Lord Ram's holy Name, and as a result he succeeded in having a divine vision of Lord Vishnu. His story in brief is this:

He was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu. He was the eldest son of the king of demons, named Hiranyakashipu. His mother was Kayaadhu, the daughter of the demon king named Jambhaasur. Both the mother and the son were initiated by sage Narad who had inspired them to become devotees of Lord Vishnu.

The story of Prahalad is narrated in detail in (i) Vishnu Puran, 1/17-20, and (ii) Bhagvata Puran, Skandha 7, Cantos 3-10. This is the story of Prahalad, the son of the demon Hiranyakashipu.

When Prahalad was still in his mother's womb, sage Narad had taught her about the principles of spiritualism and devotion for Lord Vishnu. {Refer: Srīmad Bhagwat Maha-Puran, Skandha 7, Canto 7, verse nos. 15-55.} Prahalad had heard this preaching, and when he was born he still remembered Narad's advice given to his mother. As result, Prahalad was born with devotion for Lord Vishnu firmly engrained in his heart and mind.

The father, being a demon, was an inveterate opponent of Lord Vishnu, and so naturally he couldn't tolerate his own son worshipping his enemy Lord Vishnu. He tried his best to dissuade Prahalad from being devoted to the Lord, but the son had immense faith in the Lord and would not be deterred by his father's threats, torments and scoldings. Hiranyakashipu tried even cruel means to change Prahalad, including an attempt to burn in a raging fire, but the child devotee escaped unscathed. So, finally the demon father decided to kill him personally. Prahalad was tied to a pillar and asked 'Where is your Lord Vishnu? Is he in this pillar also?' The child replied in the affirmative. Then his father swung the sword to kill him, and it was at this instant that Lord Vishnu revealed himself as the famous incarnation known as 'Nrisingh'—the upper half of his body was like a lion and the lower half was like a man. An Upanishad titled 'Nrisingh Tapini Upanishad' of the Atharva Veda is dedicated to this Lord.

Lord Nrisingh snatched the sword of the demon, which he had raised in his hand to kill Prahalad, and laid the demon across his laps. He then tore through his abdomen, and yanked out his intestines, thereby killing the demon instantly. He then picked up the child Prahalad on to his laps and lovingly licked and caressed him like a

lion does to its cub. But Prahalad prayed to the Lord to provide deliverance to the soul of his father, at which the Lord liberated the demon from all his sins.

Prahalad is credited with enumerating the nine-fold path of Bhakti, the path of devotion for the Lord, in the epic Bhaagvata, 7/5/23.

Lord Dattatreya, one of the manifestations of Lord Vishnu, had preached Prahalad about the eclectic state of Avadhut Sanyasi in the form of a huge python, known as Ajgara. Prahalad had spiritual discussions also with other sages such as Hansa (the divine Swan, an incarnation of Vishnu), and with Indra (the king of Gods).

Prahalad had four brothers, three sons and a daughter. The king of demons known as Bali, who was famous for his charities and donations, was a grandson of Prahalad. The incarnations of Vishnu as Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant, is related to this legendary king.]

ध्रुवं सगलानि जपेउ हरि नाऊँ । पायउ अचल अनूपम ठाऊँ ॥ ५ ॥
सुमिरि पवनसुत पावन नामू । अपने बस करि राखे रामू ॥ ६ ॥

dhruvam^१ sagalāni japē'u hari nā'ūṁ. pāya'u acala anūpama ṭhā'ūṁ. 5.
sumiri pavanasuta pāvana nāmū. apanē basa kari rākhē rāmū. 6.

Dhruva chanted Sri Hari's (Lord Vishnu's) holy Name because he was insulted and ill-treated by his stepmother, but the effect was such that he was given a permanent and immovable place among the 'stars in the sky'. [It is believed in mythology that the Northern-Star in the northern hemisphere of the night sky, a star that remains fixed in its position while all other stars appear to move in the sky, is actually Dhruva.]¹ (5)

By remembering the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram, the Son of the Wind God (known as Hanuman) has kept Lord Ram under his loving sway². (6)

[¹The story of Dhruva is as follows: He was the elder son of king Uttaanpaad from his first wife Suniti. The king was so charmed by his second wife named Suruchi that he completely neglected Suniti and Dhruva. Once it so happened that the child Dhruva was snubbed by his step-mother for attempting to draw affection of his father. The child was very upset and despondent. He approached his mother for solace. She advised him to accept Lord Vishnu as his eternal and loving Father and protector. For this, Dhruva had to do severe Tapa (austerity and penance). The overwhelmed child was so determined that he immediately proceeded to the forest to do Tapa. He met the celestial sage Narad on the way who instructed him on ways to meditate upon the Lord. The Lord was extremely pleased by Dhruva's sincerity and devotion and appeared before him. He blessed the child and gave him two boons—one was the restoration of his honour and kingdom of the kingdom, and the other was a permanent place in the heavens, a position so exalted, steady and unwavering that even the God could not match it. So, in due course of time, Dhruva assumed a personified form of a divine God and took up his heavenly abode in the Dhruva Loka. The story related to him is narrated in detail in the Vishnu Puran, section 1, cantos 11-12.

The *Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 mentions this Dhruv Loka and Dhruva, the God, when it describes

the path taken by a devotee of Lord Vishnu to the latter's abode in heaven when the former leaves his mortal body. The devotee has taken a ride on the back of the Garud, the vehicle of Lord Vishnu who is represented by the divine ethereal Mantra known as OM in this Upanishad, and has already passed through the Satya Loka where Brahma the creator lives, the Ishan Loka where Lord Shiva lives, the Graha Loka where the different Grahas live, the Saptarishi Mandal where the seven celestial sages live (and which is represented by the Great Bear constellation of stars in the sky), the Surya Mandal which is the realm of the Sun God, and the Chandra Mandal which is the realm of the Moon God. Then he reaches this Dhruva Mandal.

The Dhruva Loka or Dhruv Mandal is represented by the North Star and its immediate environs in the celestial map. The North Star is a personified form of Dhruva. The North Star has a great symbolic importance and value here. This star remains static and unchanging in its position in the sky—it is a metaphor for stability, uniformity, unchanging nature, steadfastness and durability. It is a vital guide for navigation purposes in the night. Hence, if a person is steady in his thoughts and single-mindedly pursues his chosen path, always keeping the aim in sight, he is sure to achieve success and obtain his objective in life. The objective of the spiritual aspirant is to attain his Lord Vishnu and find Mukti. So when he has crossed all hurdles and overcome formidable obstacles in the symbolic form of praises and honours lavished on him en-route to heaven as described above in this narration, it is only then that he can rupture through this world and reach the exalted abode where Vishnu lives. Now, if the celestial sky is imagined as a huge sphere, then this is the point from where the cosmic traveller has ruptured the solar system and entered the upper reaches of the cosmos where the upper heaven is situated. Since Lord Vishnu's abode is supposed to be unchanging and steady in its glory unlike other worlds, the metaphor of the North Star as a gateway to Vaikunth, the abode of Vishnu, appears to be very appropriate here.

²The Lord is exceptionally obliged to Hanuman and on several occasions he had expressed this too. Hanuman was more close to Lord Ram than any other single character in the Ramayana. Whenever the Lord needed help, he looked at Hanuman. Hanuman had always repeated the holy Name of Lord Ram silently, and this gave him immense strength and peace. By the way of the Name, Hanuman was able to have the Lord stay with him always. The best proof of the Lord recognizing this divine quality and spiritual nature of Hanuman was when the Lord directed him to stay in this world at the time of the Lord's own departure for his heavenly abode at the end of his tenure on this earth, and keep the light of the Lord's glory alight by way of repeating his divine Name and ensuring protection for those who said the Lord's Name. In other words, the Lord had appointed Hanuman as the heir to his legacy, and passed on the baton of Dharma (virtues of righteousness, probity, propriety, nobility and auspiciousness) and Satya (truth) to him to act as their custodian on the strength of Lord's holy Name.

A life sketch of Hanuman is narrated in the following scriptures—(i) Anand Ramayan, Saar Kand, Sarga (Canto) 13, verse nos. 155-190; (ii) Valmiki's Ramayan, Kishkindha Kand, Sarga (Canto) 66, verse nos. 1-17 (as narrated by Jamvant, the Bear king); Uttar Kand, Sarga 35-36 (as described to Sri Ram by sage Agastya).

Wonderful hymns dedicated to Lord Hanuman are found in Tulsidas' "Vinai Patrika", verse nos. 25-36.

These describe Hanuman as the Son of the Wind God.

But it is also universally believed that Hanuman is a manifestation of Lord Shiva, and represents the 'Tej' (glory and dynamism) of Lord Ram. This is clearly mentioned in Brihad Brahm Sanhita, Chapter (Pratham) 3, Canto (Adhyaya) 1, verse (Shloka) no. 102. This verse also says that it is Lord Shiva who manifested also as Sankarshan, one of the forms of Lord Vishnu. In the case of Hanuman, it is said here that "Hanuman is a manifestation of Lord Maha Shiva, and represents the Tej (glory and dynamic aspect) of Lord Ram".

Lord Hanuman was one of the greatest devotees of Lord Ram. His devotion for Lord Ram had no match. He is regarded as the wisest, the most enlightened and a highly self-realised soul. He is an incarnation of the eleventh form of Lord Shiva that is known as Rudra. When Lord Vishnu decided to manifest himself as Lord Ram in this world, all the different Gods has assumed various forms to serve the Lord. Shiva had taken the form of Hanuman to serve Lord Ram.]

अपतु अजामिलु गजु गनिकाऊ । भए मुकुत हरि नाम प्रभाऊ ॥ ७ ॥
कहाँ कहाँ लगी नाम बड़ाई । रामु न सकहिं नाम गुन गाई ॥ ८ ॥

apatu ajāmilu gaju ganikā'ū. bha'ē mukuta hari nāma prabhā'ū. 7.
kahaurṁ kahām' lagi nāma barā'ī. rāmu na sakahim nāma guna gā'ī. 8.

The sinful and fallen Ajaamil¹, the elephant king known as the Gaja², and Ganika the prostitute (harlot)³—they were all liberated by the power and the majesty of Lord Ram's holy Name. (7)

Say, how far can I (Tulsidas) describe the glory, the majesty, the divinity, and the spiritual importance and value of Lord Ram's holy Name (because I have no words for it). Even Lord Ram himself is unable to sing the glories of his own Name. (8)

[Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 130.

The story of Ajaamil, Gaja and Ganika are as follows:-

¹Ajaamil—He was a Brahmin by birth, but he became enamoured with a prostitute and married her. Bad company made him turn into a hunter. One day a group of sages passed by the village. When they asked the villagers if there was a Brahmin's house where they could spend the night, the villagers told them of Ajaamil. So these sages decided to spend the night there. When Ajaamil returned from his hunting trip with a catch of a bird and saw the sages, he felt very ashamed. He confided with them that he is a fallen man and that they should not eat in his house. The saints had a merciful heart and they thought amongst themselves that it is their moral obligation to show this man some way by which he can find liberation and deliverance.

They cooked their own meals with whatever they had. The next day, they summoned Ajaamil and told him, 'Look, your wife is pregnant. She will soon deliver a son. Give that son the name 'Narayan' (one of the many names of Lord Vishnu). This would lead to your emancipation.' And then the group of sages went on their journey.

When the son was born, Ajaamil named him as advised by them—he called the son ‘Narayan’. He was very fond of the son, and called out his name ‘Narayan, Narayan’ umpteen numbers of times during the course of the day. He was unwittingly taking the name of Lord Vishnu. This continued till the time came for his death. When he was tormented by the messengers of Yam, the God of hell and death, he became terrified and called out in fear—‘Narayan, Narayan. Save me’. Though he was calling his son, but the Lord heard his name being called out by someone in distress. So he sent his own messengers to protect the caller. The messengers of Lord chased away the messengers of Yam and took Ajaamil to heaven. When Yam complained to Vishnu, the Lord told him that if anyone calls out his name at the time of death he is duty-bound to liberate and protect him. This story tells us the power of the name of the Lord.

²Gaja, the king of elephants— In the ancient country of Dravid (the present day South India), there was a kingdom called Pandyaraaj whose king was named Indradumna. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and used to offer regular worship to the Lord with great diligence. Once, sage Agastya passed that way with his retinue of disciples. The king was so engrossed in the worship of the Lord that he did not notice the sage and neither did he get up to welcome him or pay his obeisance to him. This annoyed the sage and he cursed—‘You are like a haughty and wild elephant who pays no heed to those standing in the front. Therefore, you deserve to become an elephant—so you would take a birth as an elephant.’ When the king died he became an elephant in a pleasant island in the middle of the Kshirsagar, the celestial ocean of milk.

He had a majestic body and was very strong in his herd. Once he was playing with his she-elephants and companions in a large and beautiful pond. In this pond lived an crocodile who was actually a Gandharva (a semi-god) named Huhu in his previous life and had become an crocodile due to a curse of sage Deval. The crocodile caught hold of the leg of the elephant and started pulling him inside the deep lake. The Gaja himself and all his companions tried their best but failed to free him from the mouth of the crocodile. A long tussle followed and the elephant became completely exhausted. When the situation became so bad that the Gaja, the elephant, was about to sink fully inside the water, he broke a lotus flower and offered it to Lord Vishnu as his last worship and offering before dying. The merciful Lord rushed instantly astride his mount, called the Garud, to save him. Reaching the spot within a moment, the Lord pulled the Gaja out of the water with one hand, and with the other he opened the mouth of the crocodile to yank the leg of the elephant free from its clutches. Then the Lord cut off the crocodile’s head with his circular weapon known as the Chakra.

Both the crocodile and the elephant found liberation—the crocodile reverted to his earlier form of a Gandharva, and Gaja the elephant assumed a divine form similar to that of the Lord and went to his abode in the heaven.

³Ganika, the herlot—There was a prostitute by the name of Pingla. One day she had decorated herself with flowers and ornaments and waited eagerly for her lover. When he did not turn up even till midnight, she was very contrite and it dawned upon her that if she had spent so much of her time in devotion and remembrance of the Lord, she would have found deliverance. Right onwards, she turned away from her profession and became an ardent devotee of the Lord. This led to her emancipation and salvation.]

दो०. नामु राम को कलपतरु कलि कल्याण निवासु ।
जो सुमिरत भयो भाँग तें तुलसी तुलसीदासु ॥ २६ ॥

dōhā.

nāmu rāma kō kalapataru kali kalyāna nivāsu.
jō sumirata bhayō bhāmṅa tēm tulasī tulasīdāsu. 26.

In Kaliyug, Lord Ram's holy Name is like a Kalpataru (the all wish-fulfilling Tree of the Gods)¹, and a gracious benefactor of all in every imaginable way, by remembering and chanting of which Tulsidas has changed from being a 'Bhaang' (a hallucination producing herb having the technical name of Tetrahydro-Cannabinolis) into Tulsi (the Basil or Ocimum plant which is a herb used to sanctify food offered to deities in temples, and also as a medicine for its antibiotic properties).

[To wit, even a useless and despised man becomes a much sought-after and useful one by the good influences and good effects of Ram's holy and divine Name. In effect this means that the correctional properties of the Name removes all the negative virtues present in a creature, and transforms him into a worthy one.] (Doha no. 26)

[¹Refer also to Tulsidas' book of prayers known as 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 173.]

चौ०. चहुँ जुग तीनि काल तिहुँ लोका । भए नाम जपि जीव बिसोका ॥ १ ॥
बेद पुरान संत मत एहू । सकल सुकृत फल राम सनेहू ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

cahum' juga tīni kāla tihum' lōkā. bha'ē nāma japi jīva bisōkā. 1.
bēda purāna santa mata ēhū. sakala sukr̥ta phala rāma sanēhū. 2.

In all the four Yugas or eras (ages or phases) of creation (known as the Sata, Treta, Dwapar and Kali Yugas respectively)¹, as well as in all the three phases of time (past, present, future), and the three lokas (heaven, earth, nether world)—countless souls have got liberation and deliverance from their sorrows and miseries by chanting the holy Name of Lord Ram. (1)

The Vedas, Purans and saints have given this unanimous advice—that to have love in Lord's Form and Lord's Name is the result of all virtuous acts.² (2)

[¹According to the Purans, the ancient mythological histories of the Hindus, one cycle of creation, development and destruction is divided into four parts, each known as a Yuga. Thus, there are four such Yugas.

The first is called 'Sata Yuga' and it is equivalent to 17,28,000 human years. The second is 'Treta Yuga' and it equals to 12,96,000 human years. The third era is known as 'Dwapar' and it is equal to 8,64,000 human years. The fourth and the last age, i.e. the current era, lasts for 4,32,000 human years.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 12-14 that precede Doha no. 122 that say: “Lord Shiva, the creator Brahma (aja), sage Suka (the parrot saint), the celestial sages Sankadi and Narad, and other such exalted sages who are experts in the knowledge of Brahm (the Supreme Being) --- [12] --- It is their unanimous view, oh the king of birds (khaganāyaka), that one should have devotion and affection for the lotus-like holy feet of Lord Ram. [13] --- The Vedas, the Purans and all other scriptures unequivocally assert that there is no happiness and peace without having devotion (Bhakti) for Lord Ram. [14]”]

ध्यानु प्रथम जुग मखबिधि दूजें । द्वापर परितोषत प्रभु पूजें ॥ ३ ॥
कलि केवल मल मूल मलीना । पाप पयोनिधि जन मन मीना ॥ ४ ॥

dhyānu prathama juga makhabidhi dūjēm. dvāpara paritōṣata prabhu pūjēm.

3.

kali kēvala mala mūla malīnā. pāpa payōnidhi jana mana mīnā. 4.

As a means of finding liberation and deliverance or emancipation and salvation, there was a provision of doing contemplation and meditation during the first era called the Sata Yuga. During the second era known as Treta Yuga, sacrifices were prescribed. In the third era known as the Dwapar Yuga, the Gods were propitiated through worship¹. 93)

But in the fourth (current) era called Kali Yuga, there is only evil and corruption, moral degradation and spiritual impurities all around so much so that the mind of men are rolling in this filthy water like a fish in an ocean of sin.² (4)

[¹An exactly similar idea is expressed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 102 (b) along with Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that follow it.

²The horrors of Kali-Yuga has been detailed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 97; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 8 that precede Doha no. 97—to Doha no. 102 (a).

A similar reference to the ‘fish’ is cited in Vinai Patrika, verse no. 102.]

नाम कामतरु काल कराला । सुमिरत समन सकल जग जाला ॥ ५ ॥
राम नाम कलि अभिमत दाता । हित परलोक लोक पितु माता ॥ ६ ॥

nāma kāmataru kāla karālā. sumirata samana sakala jaga jālā. 5.

rāma nāma kali abhimata dātā. hita paralōka lōka pitu mātā. 6.

In such a terrible age (of Kali Yuga), the holy Name of the Lord is like a Kalpa-Taru (an all wish-fulfilling tree), the very remembrance of which can abolish all sorts of illusions in this world—i.e. the divine and holy Name of the Lord can liberate a creature from the net of worldly delusions¹. (5)

In Kali Yuga, Lord Ram's holy Name can give all desired results and fulfill all objectives of a devotee. It is beneficial for the creature in the afterworld after his death, while when he is alive in this world it acts as his caring parent². (6)

[¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 102 (a) and Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede Doha no. 103.

²There are many verses in Tulsidas' excellent Book of Prayers known as 'Vinai Patrika' where Lord Ram's holy Name is compared to a child's caring parent. Some of these are the following: verse no. 69, stanza no. 4; verse no. 182, stanza no. 6; verse no. 226, stanza no. 5; verse no. 254, stanza no. 1.]

नहिं कलि करम न भगति बिबेकू । राम नाम अवलंबन एकू ॥ ७ ॥
कालनेमि कलि कपट निधानू । नाम सुमति समरथ हनुमानू ॥ ८ ॥

nahim kali karama na bhagati bibēkū. rāma nāma avalambana ēkū. 7.
kālanēmi kali kapaṭa nidhānū. nāma sumati samaratha hanumānū. 8.

In Kali Yuga, neither there is a chance to do good deeds, nor is there devotion and wisdom. In this depressing scenario, the only resort or avenue (for the creature if he wishes to attain emancipation and salvation) is Ram's holy Name¹. (7)

'Kali' is like the demon Kalnemi¹ who was like a treasury of falsehood, lies, conceit, deceit, pretensions and other vices, whereas the Lord's 'Name' is like Hanuman who was very wise and able in every manner. [Here, the holy Name of Lord Ram is compared to Hanuman who had slayed this demon, thereby giving the latter liberation from bodily bondage in which his soul was trapped. Likewise, the Lord's holy Name can free the creature from all delusions, and provide his soul with the spiritual reward of deliverance, emancipation and salvation.] (8)

[¹Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 103 along with Chaupai line nos. 4-8 that precede it where an exactly similar idea has been expressed.

Refer also to Vinai Patrika, verse no. 155 which describes the horrors of Kali-Yuga.

²Kalnemi was sent by Ravana to prevent Hanuman from going ahead to bring the herb that would revive Laxman in the battle-field after he fell unconscious upon being hit by Meghnad's arrow. Kalnemi assumed the form of a hermit to trap Hanuman, but the latter discovered the demon's trick and killed him, thereby liberating his soul from the body of a demon. This episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 56—to Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 58.

Similarly, the Lord's powerful Name helps the creature to attain liberation and deliverance from the evil world surrounding him on all sides.]

दो०. राम नाम नरकेसरी कनककसिपु कलिकाल ।
जापक जन प्रह्लाद जिमि पालिहि दलि सुरसाल ॥ २७ ॥

dōhā.

rāma nāma narakēsari kanakakasipu kalikāla.
jāpaka jana prahalāda jimi pālihi dali surasāla. 27.

Lord Ram's holy and divine Name is like a Man-Lion (an incarnation of Lord Vishnu that is known as Lord Nara-Singha) and Kali is like the demon Hiranya-Kasipu (the father of Prahalad)¹. Even as the Man-Lion crushed (killed) the demon who was tormenting the devotee Prahalad (to abandon his devotion for the Lord), the Name of the Lord can destroy all evil forces tormenting the devotees during the era known as Kali. (Doha no. 27)

[¹The story of Lord Vishnu taking the form of a 'Man-Lion' relates to the story of Prahalad, the child devotee of the Lord. Lord Nara-Singha is the half lion and half man incarnation of Lord Vishnu to slay the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting Prahalad, his son, because the latter worshipped and had devotion for Lord Vishnu whom the demon loathed. It is narrated as a note appended to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 26 herein above in this Chapter (Baal Kand of Ram Charit Manas).]

चौ०. भायँ कुभायँ अनख आलसहूँ । नाम जपत मंगल दिसि दसहूँ ॥ १ ॥
सुमिरि सो नाम राम गुन गाथा । करउँ नाइ रघुनाथहि माथा ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

bhāyam' kubhāyam' anakha ālasahūm'. nāma japata maṅgala disi dasahūm'. 1.
sumiri sō nāma rāma guna gāthā. kara'um' nā'i raghunāthahi māthā. 2.

The holy Name of Lord Ram chanted with either good or bad intentions, in an angry mood or even while yawning lazily¹, will always be beneficial for the living being and do good to him no matter in which of the ten directions of the world he lives². [To wit, Lord Ram's holy, divine and glorious Name is a supreme benefactor of all the creatures of this creation, no matter where they live and in which form their soul exists in this world. Anyone who invokes the Lord's holy Name, in any way and under any circumstance, willingly or unwillingly, with devotion and love or with enmity and anger, with a cheerful mind or with a bored demeanour—the holy Name of Lord Ram would have its positive effect and bless one and all nevertheless in a universal manner, irrespective of everything else.] (1)

After remembering such a powerful and glorious 'Name' of the Lord, a Name that is both divine and holy, Tulsidas proceeded to narrate the story of the worldly deeds of Lord Ram³. (2)

[¹There are ample instances in the story of the Ramayana that endorse this observation. Lord Shiva continuously repeats Lord Ram's holy Name with devotion and affection and faith—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108.

Then in sharp contrast we have the demon Marich who was so terrified of Lord Ram that he remembered the Lord day and night out of fear, but this unwitting remembrance of the Lord made him eligible for the final liberation and deliverance of his soul in the hands of the Lord himself—this story is narrated in detail Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 24—to Doha no. 27.

Then there was Ravana, the demon king, who remembered Lord Ram with hostility (refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 103), and yet his soul attained a destiny that was envy of all—at the end of the war at Lanka, Ravana's soul exited in the form of a lightening streak from his evil body of a demon and entered the body of Lord Ram, who was a personified form of the Supreme Being, so as to merge with the cosmic Soul and find eternal peace, rest and beatitude. This fact is clearly stated in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 9-11 that precede Doha no. 103, and Chanda line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 104.

We have another example where Lord Ram's holy Name had its miraculous effect even when it was remembered upside down in an odd sort of way. It is the example of sage Valmiki who had done meditation by using Lord Ram's holy Name in the reverse order—i.e. 'MARA' instead of 'RAMA'. In spite of this unconventional way of using any name, Valmiki attained enlightenment and an exalted place amongst the greatest sages of all times. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19.

Other such instances abound where a living being had called out Lord Ram's holy Name in distress and was granted instant protection even if he was a sinful one all along his life and hadn't called out the Lord's holy Name in no way out of any devotion or love for the Lord. A reference to such souls is found in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 26 where we read about Ajaamil, Gaja and Ganika.

²The ten directions are the following—north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, zenith and nadir.

A similar idea is expressed earlier in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 27.

³Tulsidas has narrated the wonderful, the most fascinating and charming, and the most holy of stories ever told, the divine story of Lord Ram, in his epic rendering of it to which he gave the title 'Ram Charit Manas'—literally, 'the story that describes the life and time and deeds of Lord Ram who dwells in the heart of devotees and who is revered by the mind which remains focused on this story; it is a story that is like a lake full of and brimming over with spiritual nectar.

It is to be noted that Tulsidas has used all his persuasive skills, all possible arguments, words and logic to convince us all of the importance of remembering, loving and chanting, in having unwavering faith, devotion and loyalty for the holy Name of Lord Ram. He has offered all living beings a simple formula that can take care of all their spiritual needs.

The word 'Ram', the holy Name of the Lord, has been used as being synonymous with both the Nirguna aspect as well as the Saguna aspect of Lord Ram's

divine form. The ‘Nirguna’ aspect refers to that aspect which has no attributes, that is invisible, unmanifest, unqualified, cosmic and all-pervading form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness and the Absolute Truth in creation, while the ‘Saguna’ aspect refers to that aspect of the same Supreme Being that is visible, that has attributes and a form which we recognise as Lord Ram. To wit, the holy Name of Lord Ram bridges the gap between these two aspects of the Supreme Being.

For those of a higher intellect and wisdom, the former aspect of Nirguna is more appealing, whereas for the ordinary devotees, the Saguna form is more useful. And for those who are neither, Tulsidas has this simple and practical advice—to just repeat the Lord’s holy and divine Name even without having any faith and conviction in the Lord and his divine nature—because he says that Lord Ram’s holy Name is just like a well chosen medicine for all the spiritual ailments that afflict a creature in this world, for once a correct medicine is taken by a sick person then it is no matter how that medicine was taken for its good effect will surely show upon the patient, and he would be on the path of recovery.]

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(1.2) Barvai Ramayan:

[The Barvai Ramyan is a short composition of Goswami Tulsidas, consisting of only 69 two-line verses. Out of them, verse nos. 44 to 69 describe the glory of Lord Ram’s divine Name. In these verses, Tulsidas urges the mind, the intellect and the heart to remain submerged in the divine thoughts of Lord Ram and his holy Name as a means of finding all-round spiritual welfare as well as peace and happiness. We will now read all of them here.]

काल कराल बिलोकहु होइ सचेत ।
राम नाम जपु तुलसी प्रीति समेत ।।46 ।।

kāla karāla bilōkahu hō'i sacēta.
rāma nāma japu tulasī prīti samēta..46..

46-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Be careful and vigilant that the terrible Kaal (death) is visible right in front of you visible (i.e. death is imminent; it can come to grab you at any time). So, repeat and chant Lord Sri Ram's holy name constantly with love, faith and devotion.’

संकट सोच बिमोचन मंगल गेह ।
तुलसी राम नाम पर करिय सनेह ।।47 ।।

saṅkaṭa sōca bimōcana maṅgala gēha.
tulasī rāma nāma para kariya sanēha..47..

47-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! One should have deep and abiding affection, love, faith and devotion for Lord Sri Ram's holy name which is the destroyer (eliminator) of all types of sorrows, miseries, grief and gloom. This holy name is an abode (treasury) of all auspiciousness, welfare and well-being.’

कलि नहिं ग्यान बिराग न जोग समाधि ।
राम नाम जपु तुलसी नित निरुपाधि ।।48।।

kali nahim gyāna birāga na jōga samādhi.
rāma nāma japu tulasī nita nirupādhi..48..

48-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! During Kaliyug (the current era of the 4-era cycle of creation and destruction), it is not possible to have Gyan (gnosis; wisdom, erudition and knowledge of the essential universal spiritual Truths) or Vairagya (detachment, dispassion and renunciation from the material world), and neither is it possible to do Yoga (meditative practices and contemplation) nor attain Samadhi (a trance-like state of consciousness where one loses awareness of the external world and is submerged in eternal bliss).

Therefore, the only easily available way (to attain abiding peace and happiness as well as bliss and emancipation) is to constantly chant and always remember Lord Ram's holy name (which is the one-stop destination to have for all spiritual welfare and happiness).’

[Refer also to: (a) ‘Kavitawali’, Uttar Kand, verse no. 86; and (b) ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Uttar Kand, (i) Doha no. 78 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-3 that follow it; (ii) Doha no. 102; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 1-7 that precede Doha no. 103; and Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 22; (ii) Doha no. 26 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that follow it. All these verses precisely reiterate what has been advised in our present verse no. 48 herein above.]

राम नाम दुइ आखर हिउँ हितु जान ।
राम लखन सम तुलसी सिखब न आन ।।49।।

rāma nāma du'i ākhara hiyaṁ hitu jāna.
rāma lakhana sama tulasī sikhaba na āna..49..

49-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Regard the two letters (RA and MA) of Lord Ram's holy name as representing Lord Sri Ram and Laxman (his brother) respectively, and do not allow any other advice to find place in your heart (or mislead you).’

[Refer: ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 20.

Lord Ram's name has two letters—viz. 'Raa' ('Rā'; pronounced as in the English word *rather*) and 'Ma' (pronounced as in the English word *mother*). Here, the poet says that the first letter 'Raa' stands for Lord Ram, and the second letter 'Ma' stands for Laxman. He means that both the brothers love each other so much that they are always together and inseparable from one another.

From a more philosophical perspective we can interpret this to mean that creation and its conclusion are inseparable from one another—i.e. that which has come into being must end one day. In this analogy, Lord Ram represents 'creation and its sustenance' because the letter 'Raa' symbolically represents this phase of creation, while Laxman represents its 'conclusion' because the letter 'Ma' represents the termination of creation.

How do we deduce this? Well, the pronounce the letter 'Raa' we have to open our mouth, implying waking up (when a man yawns) and the rise of a new day, and when we say 'Ma' we close our mouth implying sleep or death or the end of the day. This is also what the Upanishads endorse. Refer: Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition.]

माय बाप गुरु स्वामि राम कर नाम ।
तुलसी जेहि न सोहाइ ताहि बिधि बाम ॥50॥

māya bāpa guru svāmi rāma kara nāma.
tulasī jēhi na sōhā'i tāhi bidhi bāma..50..

50-Addressing himself, Tulsidas says—'Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Lord Ram's holy name is akin to a father, a mother, a Guru and a Lord for you¹. Those who do not like this advice are very unfortunate. It appears that the Creator is opposed to them so much so that he has corrupted their wisdom so that they would continue to wallow in the murky waters of this tormenting world of delusions and sufferings.'

[To wit, such unfortunate people who do not treat Lord Ram's holy name as their best friend and the best means of attaining happiness and spiritual welfare in this world can never have liberation and deliverance from the miseries associated with this mortal world. They can never hope to find emancipation and salvation of their soul. They continue to remain trapped in this world in a perpetual way.

¹Refer: (a) 'Vinai Patrika' of Tulsidas, verse no. 79, stanza no. 3; verse no. 28, stanza no. 6; verse no. 77, stanza no. 2; verse no. 220, stanza no. 2; and (b) 'Ram Charit Manas', Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 130; Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 47.]

राम नाम जपु तुलसी होइ बिसोक ।
लोक सकल कल्याण नीक परलोक ॥51॥

rāma nāma japu tulasī hō'i bisōka.
lōka sakala kalyāna nīka paralōka..51..

51-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Recite Lord Ram's holy name and be free from all sorrows and worries. This will result in all types of welfare in this world as well as the ‘other world’ for you.’

[Here Tulsidas means that a person would get emancipation and salvation for his soul and find liberation and deliverance from the shackles of the cycle of birth and death if one constantly remembers the Lord and repeats his holy name.

A similar idea is expressed in ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 20.]

तप तीरथ मख दान नेम उपबास ।
सब ते अधिक राम जपु तुलसीदास ॥52॥

tapa tīratha makha dāna nēma upabāsa.
saba tē adhika rāma japu tulasīdāsa..52..

52-Tulsidas says—‘Oh my mind, intellect and heart! Recite the name of Lord Ram which is superior in providing spiritual rewards as compared to the cumulative benefits that are got by doing Tapa (austerities, penances), Tirtha (pilgrimage), Makha (various Yagyas or fire sacrifices and other religious rituals), Daan (making charity), Nema (following established rules and procedures), and Upwaas (fasting).’

[An exactly similar idea is expressed in ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 126. (ii) Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 130.]

महिमा राम नाम कै जान महेस ।
देत परम पद कासीं करि उपदेस ॥53॥

mahimā rāma nāma kai jāna mahēsa.
dēta parama pada kāsīm kari upadēsa..53..

53-Lord Shiva knows the potential spiritual powers, the astounding glories, the great fame and the grand eclectic virtues of Lord Ram's holy name, for he gives this advice of repeating and relying on the name of Lord Sri Ram to a dying person at Kashi (Varanasi).

[It is believed that when a man dies in Varanasi, also known as Kashi, the terrestrial abode of Lord Shiva and a famed pilgrim city of India, Lord Shiva utters the holy name of Lord Sri Ram, i.e. the word ‘RAM’, in his ears. This immediately unshackles the dying man's soul from the fetters of his sins and provides the man with liberation and deliverance. This is called ‘Mukti’.

Refer: (a) ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19; (ii) Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 46; (iii) Chaupai line no. 7

that precedes Doha no. 108; and (b) 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 108 (stanza no. 2), and verse no. 152 (stanza no. 11) which also say the same thing.]

जान आदि कबि तुलसी नाम प्रभाउ ।
उलटा जपत कोल ते भए रिषि राउ ॥54॥

jāna ādi kabi tulasī nāma prabhā'u.
ulatā japata kōla tē bha'ē riṣi rā'u..54..

54-Tulsidas says that the ancient poet Valmiki had known the potential effects of Lord Ram's divine name because by chanting it in the reverse order (as Mara instead of Ram) he had transformed himself from a cruel Kol (a tribal hunter) into an exalted sage.

[Refer: (a) 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19; (b) 'Geetawali', Sundar Kand, verse no. 40 (stanza no. 3); (c) 'Vinai Patrika', verse nos. 151 (stanza no. 7), verse nos. 156 (stanza no. 2), and verse nos. 247 (stanza no. 3).

Valmiki is the sage who had first written the divine story of Lord Ram that came to be known as the famous epic 'Ramayana'. He was also the sage in whose hermitage Sita, the divine consort of Lord Ram, had spent her last days in exile where the Lord's two sons Lav and Kush were born. He was a cruel hunter, but one day he was advised by sages Sankaadi that no one would share the burden of sins and their horrifying consequences that he has been accumulating for himself. Valmiki was taken aback. When he asked the sages for a way out of his predicament and how he can now obtain freedom from his sins, the sages advised him to do meditation using Lord Ram's holy name. Valmiki replied that he is so sinful that he cannot do that, so the sages told him to repeat the holy name in the reverse order. By obeying their advice, Valmiki not only attained enlightenment but became the famed author of the story of Lord Ram's life and time when he penned the Ramayana. Besides this, Lord Ram himself visited him in his hermitage during the Lord's sojourn into the forest to eliminate the cruel demon race.]

कलसजोनि जियँ जानेउ नाम प्रतापु ।
कौतुक सागर सोखेउ करि जियँ जापु ॥55॥

kalasajōni jiyam' jānē'u nāma pratāpu.
kautuka sāgara sōkhē'u kari jiyam' jāpu..55..

55-Sage Agastya had realised the glory and potent of Lord Ram's holy name in his heart, for he had invoked it, and on its strength he had dried up the ocean in a playful manner (i.e. without the least effort).

[The story goes that once when Indra had killed the demon Vrittaasur, the other demons led by 'Kaaleya' managed to escape and they hid themselves under the water of the ocean. From there they began terrorizing the sages and saints on earth. They stayed under water during daytime and came out at night to torment and devour these

sages, and generally cause nuisance and havoc all around. These demons had not spared even such renowned sages of the time as Vashistha, Chyavan and Bharadwaj, because the demons attacked their hermitages and killed the junior sages and seers who lived there. It was then that the Gods, led by their king Indra, requested sage Agastya to somehow expose the demons. At this request the sage had scooped up the water of the ocean in a cup made by joining the two palms of his hands and had drunk the water of the ocean in one gulp so as to expose the demons. The Gods were then able to destroy them. Some of the demons however managed to escape and hid themselves in the nether world. This is how the demon race survived then.

However, when the ocean was completely dried up, it created another problem for the world because countless marine creatures began to suffer and die. Besides this, the ocean was the largest natural reservoir of water on earth. So the Gods requested sage Agastya to refill it. The sage replied that the water has been digested in his stomach, but he can oblige the Gods by reproducing the ocean in the form of urine. That is the reason, according to this legendary story of the Purans, why the ocean is corroding, salty and sour—because it is the urine of sage Agastya.

This fact, that the ocean is corroding, sour and salty because it is the urine of sage Agastya is explicitly narrated in the Anand Ramayan (purported to have been written by sage Valmiki), in its Vilaas Kand (Chapter), ninth Sarga (Canto), verse nos. 18-24 where Sita explains to Lopaamudraa, the wife of sage Agastya, why Sri Ram had constructed the bridge in order to cross the ocean to reach Lanka. She explained that the Lord did not ask the sage to dry up the ocean once again by drinking its water because it would be unthinkable to ask the sage to drink his own urine. Even if the sage had actually drunk the water, the Lord would be heaped with the ignominy of being so selfish that he made a Brahmin drink his own urine so that his purpose is served. The Lord did not swim across the ocean because it would be insulting and extremely disgusting for the Lord to swim in urine, and it would also be improper for him to step across a Brahmin's urine because it is to be regarded as holy as the urine of a cow.]

तुलसी सुमिरत राम सुलभ फल चारि।
बेद पुरान पुकारत कहत पुरारि।।56।।

tulasī sumirata rāma sulabha phala cāri.
bēda purāna pukārata kahata purāri..56..

56-Tulsidas says that the four fruits for all meritorious deeds done in this world (i.e. Artha, Dharma, Kaam, Moksha)¹ are easily available by merely remembering Lord Sri Ram's holy name. This fact is asserted clearly and proclaimed unequivocally by the Vedas, as well as is endorsed by Lord Shiva².

[¹The four fruits for good deeds are the following—‘Artha’ or material prosperity and wealth; ‘Dharma’ or acquisition of the virtues of righteousness, probity and propriety; ‘Kaam’ or fulfillment of desires; and ‘Moksha’ or spiritual emancipation and deliverance.

²Refer: ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, Doha no. 25.]

राम नाम पर तुलसी नेह निबाहु ।
एहि ते अधिक न एहि सम जीवन लाहु ।।57।।

rāma nāma para tulasī nēha nibāhu.
ēhi tē adhika na ēhi sama jīvana lāhu..57..

57-Extolling the greatness and glory of Lord Ram's holy name, Tulsidas says that one should have abiding endearment, love, affection and devotion for the Lord's holy name. What to talk of being greater than this reward, no other benefit or reward can ever become even an equal to it in this world.

दोस दुरित दुख दारिद दाहक नाम ।
सकल सुमंगल दायक तुलसी राम ।।58।।

dōsa durita dukha dārida dāhaka nāma.
sakala sumaṅgala dāyaka tulasī rāma..58..

58-Tulsidas says that Lord Ram's holy name can, on the one hand, burn (destroy or eliminate) all faults, sins, sorrows, miseries, wants and poverties that torment a person, and on the other hand it can bestow all auspiciousness, goodness, good fortunes, welfare and well-being that exist in this world.

केहि गिनती मह गिनती जस बन घास ।
राम जपत भए तुलसी तुलसीदास ।।59।।

kēhi ginatī maha ginatī jasa bana ghāsa.
rāma japata bha'ē tulasī tulasīdāsa..59..

59-[Talking about himself and his past, Tulsidas says—] 'What did I count and what was my standing in the society? My condition was like the wild grass in the forest (which is uncared for, trampled upon, and worthless). But by chanting (reciting or constantly remembering) Lord Sri Ram's divine name, I have become as pure, revered and exalted as the Tulsi (Basil) plant¹.'

[¹The Tulsi plant is much respected in India as it is a sacred plant because it is dear to Lord Vishnu. In this verse, Tulsidas is playing with the word 'Tulsi' in his name. Earlier in life, the saint had to suffer a lot, having to beg for even basic meals. But when he started relying on the Lord's holy name 'Ram' he became very famous even during his lifetime.

The humility, simplicity and piety of Tulsidas, and his absolute faith and devotion for Lord Ram, as well as the fact that he credits the Lord for whatever he is and whatever he has in this world is reiterated by him in his other books too. For instance we have 'Vinai Patrika', which is a marvellous book of prayers. It has a wide swathe of verses in which we read that Tulsidas has expressed a similar emotion as done in the present

verse of Barvai Ramayan—e.g. verse nos. 95-96, 109-110, 114, 117-118, 142-143, 158-160, 171, 208 etc.

In ‘Kavitawali’ too Tulsidas has used a similar method to pray to Lord Ram in its Uttar Kand. Refer specially to verse nos. 46-82.

It ought to be noted that English versions of both these books has already been published by this humble author, and they are available in ebook as well as printed book formats for order on-line if the reader so wants.]

आगम निगम पुरान कहत करि लीक ।
तुलसी राम नाम कर सुमिरन नीक ।।60 ।।

āgama nigama purāna kahata kari līka.
tulasī rāma nāma kara sumirana nīka..60..

60-Tulsidas says that the Aagam (Tantra Shastra), Nigam (Vedas) and Purans (ancient mythological histories of the Hindus) have underlined the fact (i.e. they have all unanimously declared) that remembering Lord Ram's holy name is the best path of all spiritual paths to be followed by a seeker in this world.

[Refer: ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 45; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 12-14 that precede Doha no. 122.]

सुमिरहु नाम राम कर सेवहु साधु ।
तुलसी उतरि जाहु भव उदधि अगाधु ।।61 ।।

sumirahu nāma rāma kara sēvahu sādhu.
tulasī utari jāhu bhava udadhi agādhu..61..

61-Tulsidas advises that one should constantly remember Lord Sri Ram's holy name, and serve people who are saintly, holy, pious and righteous. In this way one can easily get to the other side of the ‘Bhavsagar’ (bhava udadhi).

[The words ‘bhava udadhi’ literally mean an ‘ocean’ that symbolizes this mundane, deluding and entrapping ‘world’ of mortal existence that consists of an endless cycle of birth and death. This ‘gross world of transmigration’ is considered to be like an ‘endless ocean’ because there seems to be no end of it in sight.

Tulsidas says that the only way to cross this seemingly endless ocean is to take the help of Lord Ram’s holy name as it acts as a sturdy ship that can easily and certainly take a person to the other side. It means that Lord Ram’s holy name will provide liberation and deliverance to the soul of the devotee and ensure that he gets emancipation and salvation.]

कामधेनु हरि नाम कामतरु राम ।
तुलसी सुलभ चारि फल सुमिरत नाम ।।62 ।।

kāmadhēnu hari nāma kāmataru rāma.
tulasī sulabha cāri phala sumirata nāma..62..

62-Tulsidas says that the name of Lord Ram is like a (all wish-fulfilling) Kamdhenu cow, while the Lord's form is akin to the (all wish-fulfilling) Kalpa Tree. Merely by constantly remembering Lord Ram's holy name, all the four fruits (Artha, Dharma, Kaam and Moksha) are easily accessible (to the devotee).

[The 'Kamdhenu cow' is the cow of Gods. It is believed that by serving it one can be blessed with all the things one desires. Similarly, the 'Kalpa Tree' is a wish fulfilling tree of the Gods; all the things that are desired by a person are obtained by worshipping this tree.

The 'four fruits' that stand for all the best of rewards that one can expect for one's meritorious deeds done in life have been described in verse no. 56.

Refer also to: (a) 'Ram Charit Manas', (i) Baal Kand, Doha no. 26; Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 27; (ii) Uttar Kand, Doha no. 102; (b) 'Dohawali', verse no. 27-28, 76, 183, 215, 218.]

तुलसी कहत सुनत सब समुझत कोय ।
बड़े भाग अनुराग राम सन होय ।।63।।

tulasī kahata sunata saba samujhata kōya.
barē bhāga anurāga rāma sana hōya..63..

63-Tulsidas says that everyone talks about worshipping Lord Ram and having love, devotion, faith and dedication for the Lord, but rarely does anyone implement it. Love and devotion for Sri Ram germinates or arises in one's heart only when one is very fortunate and lucky.

[Tulsidas means that it is too easy to preach about having faith in Lord Ram, about having devotion and love for Lord Ram, but difficult to practice it. The next verse nos. 64-65 are very explicit on this.

It is only when all the accumulated good deeds done by a man begin to show their auspicious results that he is inspired and motivated to worship the Lord and have devotion for him. If it does happen, then that man is extremely lucky and fortunate. Usually a person who becomes eligible to get rewards for his meritorious deeds in life would prefer to such worldly things and material welfare that would showcase his success to the world, satisfy his ego, and fulfill his aspirations in this physical world, but rarely would one wish to have the grand spiritual reward of having love and devotion for the Lord because its benefits are more of a spiritual nature rather than of material nature.

If a person is wise and sagacious enough to know it then surely he will get abiding peace, happiness and bliss for himself; he will be blessed with liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration which would end all his miseries for eternity. His soul would find eternal rest by attaining emancipation and salvation.]

एकहि एक सिखावत जपत न आप ।

तुलसी राम प्रेम कर बाधक पाप ॥64॥

ēkahi ēka sikhāvata japata na āpa.
tulasī rāma prēma kara bādhaka pāpa..64..

64-People teach others to recite Lord Ram's holy name, but they do not do it themselves. Tulsidas says that it is because their sins and past evil deeds create hindrance or obstacles for them. [To wit, the past sins and evil deeds of a man prevents him from chanting the holy name of Lord Ram. This name of the Lord is so holy and pure that impure and unholy can never come near it; they feel terrified of it. So therefore in all sooth and without gainsay, if one truly finds interest in repeating the holy name of Lord Ram and loves the Lord then surely he is a blessed soul.]

[Refer verse no. 63 herein above in this context.]

मरत कहत सब सब कहँ सुमिरहु राम ।
तुलसी अब नहिं जपत समुझि परिनाम ॥65॥

marata kahata saba saba kaham̐ sumirahu rāma.
tulasī aba nahim̐ japata samujhi parināma..65..

65-Tulsidas says that when a person is about to die, all advise him to say Lord Ram's holy name (so that his soul finds eternal peace and deliverance), but the irony is that they don't do it themselves while they are still alive!

[In verse no. 63 we read that it is easy to preach about reciting the holy name of Lord Ram but rarely would one find a person who actually practices what he preaches. Say, how blessed and fortunate that man is who remembers the Lord, who is devoted to him and repeats the Lord's holy name in his life without waiting for the time when others would tell him to do so while he is lying on his death-bed. If the Lord's holy name is so powerful and effective that saying it once at the time of death can liberate the soul, provide it peace and take it across the world of transmigration, then imagine what joy one would have experienced in life if he had done it for a lifetime. Truly indeed, his life would be one that is highly blessed, peaceful and enjoyable; a life that would be a source of happiness for the man as well as an inspiration for others. But it actually does not happen in life because a man remains submerged in worldly activities and forgets about the Lord and his benevolence. If he does remember the Lord then usually it is when he faces some adversities in life and wants a quick-fix for it. Rarely would a man remember the Lord out of pure devotion and love for him.

All living beings are under the influence of Maya, the forces of delusions that cloud their mind and overshadow all wisdom—and this Maya is so overpowering, reckless and selfish that it prevents the creature from seeing sense; Maya wants to keep the creature trapped in the cycle of birth and death. This is because Maya was created by the Creator as a tool to ensure that the wheel of creation goes on rotating perpetually. If the creature realized the truth and all found liberation and deliverance

by leading a pious life, taking the shelter of the holy name of Lord Ram and seeking the Lord's help to find deliverance from the cycle of transmigration for themselves, say then how will this wheel of creation set in motion by the Creator continue to go on and on?]

तुलसी राम नाम जपु आलस छाँडु ।
राम बिमुख कलि काल को भयो न भाँडु ।।66 ।।

tulasī rāma nāma japu ālasa chāṁḍu.
rāma bimukha kali kāla kō bhayō na bhāṁḍu..66..

66-Tulsidas advises that one should discard indolence, lethargy and laxity, and instead be vigilant in repeating Lord Ram's holy name constantly. By being opposed to Lord Ram, who has not been made to wander aimlessly (like a directionless vagrant or a vagabond without a destination) in this world?

[A person who does not have faith and love for Lord Ram is like a child without a parent, or a man without an identity or a nationality. He is like a rudderless ship without a captain, a ship that does not have an anchor either. He just keeps drifting and drifting in life like a log in the high sea of this mundane existence, buffeted and tossed about in a rough and merciless manner. Say, how can such a person ever expect to find peace and happiness and stability in life?]

तुलसी राम नाम सम मित्र न आन ।
जो पहुँचाव राम पुर तनु अवसान ।।67 ।।

tulasī rāma nāma sama mitra na āna.
jō pahumcāva rāma pura tanu avasāna..67..

67-Tulsidas says that there is no other better friend for a person than Lord Sri Ram's holy name which can ferry the soul to the abode of the Lord at the time of the person's death (and liberate him from the cycle of birth and death).

[To wit, Lord Ram is the best friend of all living beings. He cares for all in a selfless manner. The Lord is extremely forgiving, merciful, compassionate, kind, graceful and benevolent. He is always ready to extend a helping hand to a devotee who seeks the Lord's help. But one must beware—that the Lord does not like pretensions, falsehoods, deceit and conceit. One must be honest and truthful in his dealings with the Lord, for otherwise punishment becomes due.]

राम भरोस नाम बल नाम सनेहु ।
जनम जनम रघुनंदन तुलसी देहु ।।68 ।।

rāma bharōsa nāma bala nāma sanēhu.
janama janama raghunandana tulasī dēhu..68..

68-[Praying to Lord Sri Ram, Tulsidas says—] ‘Oh Raghunandan (Lord Sri Ram)! Give this Tulsidas the assurance that he will get your personal support and protection, and the support and protection of your holy and divine name ‘Ram’, along with having an abiding love and devotion in both (the Lord himself as well as his holy name) in all the future births that he (Tulsidas) might have to take.’

[Refer also to ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 204 where Bharat, the younger brother of Lord Ram who was very devoted and faithful to the Lord, has prayed for the same blessings when he paid his obeisance to the presiding deity of Prayag, the holy pilgrimage site where three holy rivers Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati meet.

The word ‘Raghunandan’ literally means a son of king Raghu’s dynasty. This title is applied to Lord Ram because he was born in this noble family of kings who descended from king Raghu who ruled the ancient kingdom of Ayodhya.

In this verse the saint-poet Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram and expresses his wish that he should be devoted to the Lord and love him from the core of his heart, and treat the Lord as his only friend and benefactor in all the future births he may have to take.

Does this mean that Tulsidas is not sure of his liberation and deliverance inspite of having deep devotion for the Lord in his current life? No, it’s not that; he simply implies that if by chance his sins, that he may have accumulated inadvertently in his current life, perforce him to take another birth then his prayers to Lord Ram would come in handy for him, for now it would be the Lord’s responsibility to ensure that Tulsidas remains devoted to him in his new birth and lives a pious life fully devoted to the Lord so that finally he finds liberation and deliverance for himself at the end of that birth or subsequent birth.

This idea is continued in the next verse no. 69 also.]

जनम जनम जहँ जहँ तनु तुलसिहि देहु ।
तहँ तहँ राम निबाहिब नाथ सनेहु ॥69॥

janama janama jaham’ jaham’ tanu tulasihī dēhu.
taham’ taham’ rāma nibāhība nātha sanēhu..69..

69-[Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram. He says—] ‘Oh Lord, in whichever form you (i.e. the Supreme Creator, Lord Ram) make this Tulsidas take birth again in this world, I beseech you most earnestly oh my dear Lord that you should uphold your promise of having love, endearment and affection for me for all times to come, and therefore make sure that I have your benevolence and love in the new life the way I have it in this current life.’

[This is a sort of concluding thanksgiving note by Tulsidas. He acknowledges that Lord Ram is merciful to him and loves him too. So Tulsidas prays to the Lord to keep him under his wings in his next birth too so that he does not have to worry about anything. Who knows what tricks Maya (the delusion-creating powers of the Creator) may play on him so that he becomes deluded like other living beings, and under the

influence of Maya he may forget the Lord. So in a way Tulsidas plays his hands safe by praying to Lord Ram that it is he, the Lord, who has to ensure that Tulsidas remains safe and sound even in his next birth.]

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(1.3) Dohawali:

[Tulsidas' book titled 'Dohawali' is a collection of 573 two-line verses that are called 'Doha'. These Dohas are like an marvellous collection of priceless gems of wisdom pertaining to the temporal world as well as to spiritualism. For the purpose of our present Book we shall, however, select and read an assortment of the Dohas that are relevant to the theme of this Book, viz. 'Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name'.]

4. चित्रकूट सब दिन बसत प्रभु सिय लखन समेत ।
राम नाम जप जापकहि तुलसी अभिमत देत ॥

4. citrakūṭa saba dina basata prabhu siya lakhana samēta.
rāma nāma japa jāpakahi tulasī abhimata dēta..

Lord Ram, along with Sita and Laxman, always reside in Chitrakoot. Tulsidas says he (Sri Ram) fulfils the wishes of all those who (constantly) chant his holy Name (i.e. the holy Mantra 'Ram') with faith, conviction, devotion and sincerity. (4)

[This Doha appears in Ram Agya Prashnawali in 2/5/7. Here the context is the time after Bharat had gone back to Ayodhya from Chitrakoot, having failed to persuade the Lord to return home. The place known as Chitrakoot has great natural beauty—with mountains, rich forests and the pristine water of river Mandakini. Amongst the different places where the Lord stayed during his 14 years of exile period, Chitrakoot occupies a pride of place. Tulsidas is very enchanted by the beauty of this place. So he prefers to describe the beauty of the Lord's sight at this place because the Lord's beauty coincides with the beauty of Nature surrounding him.

Tulsidas says that a person must make his heart and mind so beautiful that the Lord lives in them happily as he lived in Chitrakoot. Besides this, the remembrance of the holy Name of Lord Ram gives the person the same peace and solace that one obtains in the extremely enchanting and beauteous environs of Chitrakoot.]

5. पय अहार फल खाइ जपु राम नाम षट मास ।
सकल सुमंगल सिद्धि सब करतल तुलसीदास ॥

5. paya ahāra phala khā'i japu rāma nāma ṣaṭa māsa.
sakala sumaṅgala sid'dhi saba karatala tulasīdāsa..

Chant Lord Ram's holy Name for 6 months, surviving either by drinking milk or eating fruits. Tulsidas says by doing so, all the 'Siddhis' (great spiritual achievements, mystical powers and fruits of labour) and all sorts of auspiciousness and good fortunes would be easily available to the person without making much effort or striving for them separately endlessly. (5)

[This Doha appears in Ram Agya Prashnawali in 7/4/7.

The time frame of '6 months' has a symbolic value. It is to stress that the spiritual benefits that one gets after spending a whole lifetime in following the rigorous laws of Dharma (observing principles of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety and noble conduct and thoughts, morality and ethics), observing strict codes of righteous conduct and auspicious thoughts, doing Yoga (meditation) complete with its eight limbs or branches such as Dhyan (contemplation) etc., doing so many other religious deeds such as making charities, going on pilgrimage, doing sacrifices, observing many strict vows, being diligent and alert in one's actions and thoughts, so on and so forth—all such and many more other spiritual and worldly rewards or benefits are available to a person if he simply spends some time in meditating upon Lord Ram's holy Name and having devotion for Lord Ram.

In short, what rewards one gets with so much labour and spending so much time is available to him so very easily if he just takes some time off his busy life to meditate upon the holy Name of Lord Ram and having devotion for the Lord.

The time frame of six months to attain one's spiritual goal of final liberation and deliverance is miniscule as compared to the time scale that the soul has to spend wandering from one birth to another in countless numbers of bodies in as many countless numbers of births in search of its liberation and deliverance.

A wise man must strive for rewards that have eternal value, value that is sustainable and universal, rather than a reward that has superficial value of fleeting importance. So, the soul's emancipation and salvation that is obtained by repeating and depending upon Lord Ram's holy and all-powerful divine Name is always preferred as a reward by wise men as compared to transient gains and worldly fame obtained by doing so many other religious deeds and noble undertakings that are deemed to be auspicious and rewarding.]

6. राम नाम मनिदीप धरु जीह देहरीं द्वार ।
तुलसी भीतर बाहेरहुँ जौं चाहसि उजिआर ॥

6. rāma nāma manidīpa dharu jīha dēharīm dvāra.
tulasī bhītara bāhērahūṁ jāuṁ cāhasi ujī'āra..

Tulsidas says that if you wish to light up both the inside and the outside of you (i.e. if you wish to have enlightenment as well as knowledge of both the spiritual world as well as the mundane world), the best way is to keep the lamp of Ram's Name on the doorway of your mouth (i.e. keep on constantly repeating the holy Name of 'Ram'). (6)

[This Doha appears in Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, as its Doha no. 21.

A light of an ordinary lamp can be extinguished either when the oil is exhausted or by a gust of wind, thereby causing darkness. But Sri Ram's holy Name is such that the illumination would be permanent. The 'darkness' here refers to ignorance and delusions that prevent the Atma, the soul of the living being, from seeing and experiencing the truth of his pure conscious 'self' as well as seeing the goal of his life. A deluded person is like a ship without a rudder in the choppy ocean, a ship that is tossed and turned violently and never able to reach its destination. An ignorant person is like one who gets terrified on seeing a length of rope lying on the ground, thinking it to be a serpent.]

7. हियँ निर्गुन नयनन्हि सगुन रसना राम सुनाम ।
 मनहुँ पुरट संपुट लसत तुलसी ललित ललाम ॥

7. hiyam' nirguna nayanahi saguna rasanā rāma sunāma.
 manahum' puraṭa sampuṭa lasata tulasī lalita lālāma..

Tulsidas says that constantly remembering in one's heart the Supreme Being who is formless and without attributes, keeping the Lord's divine form (as described in verse nos. 1-3) within one's sight (i.e. keeping the mind focused on the holy portrait of the Lord God known as Ram), and repeating the spiritually enchanting and beautiful Name of the Lord (i.e. 'Ram') by the tongue— these are like priceless and magnificent gems that have been placed in a beautiful golden box¹.

According to Tulsidas, the Lord's holy Name 'Ram' is far superior to either or both the Saguna as well as the Nirguna forms of God which are like the two lids of the golden box. (7)

[¹Here, the body is the golden box. The three gems that are placed in this box are (i) the Atma that resides in the heart of the devotee and is a representative of the cosmic Atma or the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm or the Parmatma who is invisible, all pervading and all-encompassing, the Atma that the individual is expected to meditate upon, (ii) the vision of the Lord in the form of Lord Ram which the individual's mind should remain focused on and contemplating upon, and (iii) the holy Name of the Lord that the individual is expected to keep repeating by his tongue. If this happens then the ordinary body becomes 'golden' or worthy, otherwise it is just like a sac full of bones, flesh, muscles, excreta and blood.

This stanza advises the devotee how to meditate upon Lord Ram in the proper way. He must involve his heart, mind, eyes and tongue, all of them together. While doing Japa (repetition) of the holy Name of Lord Ram with his tongue, the devotee must keep the holy vision of the Lord in the front of his 'mental eyes'—that is, the holy image of Lord Ram must be firmly established in the sub-conscious aspect of the 'mind' so that inspite of seeing the physical world when one has to deal with it, this image of the world is kept outside and not allowed to enter the sub-conscious aspect of the mind which is occupied by the holy image of the Lord. Not only this, the devotee must realise that the cosmic Consciousness known as the Parmatma resides inside his own heart as the Atma, and therefore while repeating the Lord holy Name with his tongue and keeping his mind focused on the divine vision of the Lord he should also meditate upon the Parmatma enshrined in his own heart as the Atma.

There is yet another way how this stanza can be interpreted. A man must be wise and enlightened enough to realise that the invisible Parmatma that lives in his heart as his Atma has revealed himself as the visible world outside. All that exists is one or the other form of the same Parmatma which the scriptures prefer to call Brahm, the Supreme Being, the cosmic Consciousness. That is, a wise and self-realised man sees the Parmatma everywhere in the physical world. All forms of creatures he sees in this world are one or the other forms of Parmatma. Since the Atma that lives in each living being is an image of the Parmatma, it follows that there is no difference between the Atma that lives inside a person's own body in his heart and the Atma that lives in the body of the other person. This principle of non-duality of the Atma is the foundation of Advaita Vedanta.

So true devotion is achieved when one remains contemplative and constantly meditates upon the Lord by repeating his holy Name 'Ram' while being focused on the Atma internally and virtually seeing the Lord as existing in all the visible forms that he sees in the external world.

²In this stanza, Lord Ram's holy Name is compared to a magnificent gem, and Saguna and Nirguna aspects of God are like the bottom and top of the golden box where the gem is placed. The Saguna aspect of the Supreme Being is the one that has attributes and a physical form—such as that of Lord Ram, and the Nirguna aspect of the same Supreme Being is the one which has no attributes and visible forms—such as that of Lord Vishnu, the macrocosmic form of the Lord.

Refer also Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 22 which says “ascetics keep spiritually awake by repeating the Lord's holy Name by their tongue, and this helps them to be perfect renunciates and abandon the trap of delusions that has spread around them in the world created by the Maya of the creator”.

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 23. They say that—“Brahm, the Supreme Being, has two forms—one is the Saguna form, i.e. the form that is visible, has attributes, special characteristics and a physical gross form, and the other is Nirguna, which is the opposite of Saguna and is the cosmic all-pervading universal form of the Lord. These two forms are from time immemorial, are eternal and equally true. They are indescribable and fathomless. They are equally beautiful and mystical. In my (Tulsidas') view, the Name of the Lord is superior to them both, and it has been able to keep both the forms of the Lord under its spell. That is, one may be confused about which of the two forms of Brahm should one pursue for his spiritual needs, but the Lord's holy Name bridges this gap; it sort of helps the spiritual aspirant to tide over this dilemma by taking him effortlessly across the world and provide his soul liberation and deliverance. Pursuing the Lord through the twin path of Saguna and Nirguna is like dealing with fire—because the Saguna form of the Lord is like the visible form of fire, and the Nirguna form is like the latent fire that lives inherently in firewood. Fire in whatsoever form is dangerous as it would burn the person. The holy and divine Name of the Lord is like knowing about the virtues of fire (that it burns impurities) without actually getting one's fingers burnt. That is why I regard the Name of the Lord as being superior to the two forms of the Lord.

Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness and the Holy Spirit, is immaculate and taintless; it resides in the bosom of all living beings as their consciousness, their Atma, their soul, their Spirit. In spite of the fact that Brahm is a fountainhead and a reservoir of eternal and fathomless bliss, the creatures are still engulfed in sorrows

and miseries (though Brahm resides in their inner self as the Atma). This dilemma can be overcome by the help of the holy Name of the Lord—by diligently pursuing it, by faithfully taking its refuge, by knowing what the name means, to whom does it belong, what are its mystical powers and spiritual benefits etc., one can be enlightened about the otherwise enigmatic and unknown Brahm (and therefore attain eternal peace and bliss so characteristic of Brahm-realisation) just like the case when one begins to appreciate the importance and material benefits of possessing a piece of stone which turns out to be a priceless when its value and uniqueness is established or discovered.”]

8. सगुन ध्यान रुचि सरस नहिं निर्गुन मन ते दूरि ।
तुलसी सुमिरहु रामको नाम सजीवन मूरि ।।

8. saguna dhyāna ruci sarasa nahim nirguna mana tē dūri.
tulasī sumirahu rāmakō nāma sajjivana mūri..

One does not have devotional interest in the Saguna form of the Lord God which has a physical form that is visible and easy to relate to, nor does one understand the true nature, meaning and essence of the Nirguna (formless) aspect of the Supreme Being because of it being too abstract and beyond his comprehension.

Tulsidas says in such a condition one should partake of the herb called Sri Ram's holy Name (i.e. the holy mantra of Sri Ram—which is ‘RAM’) as a remedy for all spiritual ills associated with ignorance, delusions and incompetence as well as lack of wisdom and knowledge. (8)

[Tulsidas means that the easiest way of attaining emancipation and salvation of the soul is to rely on the stupendous spiritual and astounding divine powers of the Lord's holy Name ‘Ram’. The other two ways to attain the same objective are extremely difficult in the current era. These two ways are the following—

(i) Having love and devotion for the Supreme Being's incarnation in the form of Lord Ram. It is difficult for a person because devotion and love have their seat in the heart, and this heart is pre-occupied with worldly attachments and longings. The mind too is engrossed in the affairs of the world which seem real to it. These two instruments being somehow occupied by the thoughts of the world leaves no space for devotion and love for the Lord to take a foothold. A man is always surrounded by the material world in which he lives, a mortal world that is steeped in delusions and so confusing that a person is left dazed and perplexed under its onslaught.

(ii) The other method is to realise the Supreme Being through the path of knowledge, enlightenment, wisdom, contemplation and meditation, but this path is more difficult than the first because it requires higher levels of discriminatory powers of the intellect and a superior wisdom that few possess. An ordinary person does not have the required level of wisdom and the ability of the mind to ponder into the unknown and to understand something exceptionally ethereal and sublime. One of the reasons why this is difficult is that the mind has been trained to understand things related to the material world that is gross in nature, and not of a world that has a sublime and ethereal existence. The material world of sense objects is easy to see, hear, feel, taste and smell, but the ethereal world is too sublime for the sense organs of the body to perceive.

So these two paths seem virtually blocked for an ordinary spiritual aspirant. Hence, the only path—which fortunately is extremely easy and comfortable to follow—left for him to follow is to rely upon the holy Name of the Lord, which is ‘Ram’, to find his way to liberation and deliverance.

Incidentally, this name ‘Ram’ is also called the ‘Tarak Mantra’—i.e. it is a divine and mystical spiritual formula that helps the creature to attain liberation and deliverance from this world and its inherent problems, pains, miseries, troubles and tribulations. The emancipation and salvation of a creature’s soul or Atma is taken care of by the powerful influence of the Tarak Mantra. It kind of lifts one out of the quagmire in which he finds himself trapped; it is like key that liberates the soul from the shackle of the gross body and provides deliverance to the creature from the endless cycle of miseries and pains associated with the mundane gross world in which he lives as well as the endless cycle of birth and death in which he finds himself entangled.

The name of the Lord, i.e. RAM, is so easy to access that even the illiterate man can say it as easily as one who is exceptionally learned and enlightened. Its effects are magical for the welfare of the soul as well as the physical being of the creature himself. He derives immense mental peace and tranquility by repeating the Lord’s holy Name ‘Ram’. It is like a balm that is applied over weary nerves to soothe them.]

9. एक छत्रु एक मुकुटमनि सब बरननि पर जोड ।
तुलसी रघुबर नाम के बरन बिराजत दोड ॥

9. ēku chatru ēku mukuṭamani saba baranani para jō'u.
tulasī raghubara nāma kē barana birājata dō'u..

Tulsidas says that the two letters of Lord Ram's name (Ra and Ma) crown all the words and alphabets of the Hindi language—the former as an umbrella [the sign that is put on the top of a letter and pronounced as 'ref'—e.g. the equivalent sound of the

English word *rum* or *wrung*], and the other as a crown jewel [the sign (ं) put on the top of a letter and pronounced as 'anuswar' which has an equivalent English pronunciation in the word *rung*]. (9)

[This Doha appears in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand as Doha no. 20. The symbolism of the two signs of ‘Ref’ and ‘Anuswar’ is obvious. Like a king whose crown jewels and the ceremonial umbrella over the head adds to his royal splendour and majesty, all the alphabets of the Sanskrit language, which is the language of the scriptures, and the Hindi language, which is the national language of India, get their majesty and authority because of the presence amongst them of these two letters of the Lord’s holy Name ‘Ram’—i.e. the letters ‘Ra’ and ‘Ma’.

The three components of the name ‘Ram’ are the following—Ra, Aa, and Ma. These are regarded as being equivalent to the three subtle sounds of the divine Mantra ‘OM’ which pertains to the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm, and the cosmic vibration generated by this Consciousness that is known as Pranav.

The spiritual and metaphysical importance as well as the significance of Lord Ram’s divine and holy Name ‘Ram’ vis-à-vis the ethereal Mantra OM which pertains

to the supreme Brahm is elaborately explained in two Upanishads devoted to Lord Ram—viz. Ram Rahasya Upanishad and Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition. Canto 2 of the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad is especially devoted to this topic. These two Upanishads have been included as part of volume no. 5 dealing with the Upanishads of the Atharva Veda which is a part of the series on the 108 Upanishads published by this author.]

10. नाम राम को अंक है सब साधन हैं सून ।
अंक गएँ कछु हाथ नहीं अंक रहें दस गून ॥

10. nāma rāma kō aṅka hai saba sādhana hair̥m sūna.
aṅka ga'eṁ kachu hātha nahir̥m aṅka rahēr̥m dasa gūna..

Lord Ram's holy Name 'RAM' is like a 'numeral' (such as 1, 2, 3 etc.), and all other means of salvation and emancipation are like 'zero' (0). This zero has no value if it is not preceded by any of the numerals – and when it is preceded by any one of the numerals then the same zero assumes great value because it is honoured as being able to add a ten-fold or hundred-fold or thousand-fold value to the numeral. But sans the numeral, the zero is equivalent to naught. (10)

[Note—The zero taken independently has no value of its own; it is equivalent to naught or nothing. But it becomes very effective at adding value to any given entity if it is preceded by any of the numerals. At the same time, all cardinal numbers are enhanced in their value when they are accompanied by zero.

In simple words it means that all the avenues of spiritual welfare and worldly well-being are effective and meaningful only when the Lord's holy Name precedes them. Sans this name they are all worthless like the numeral zero. To take an example from the world, all the royal regalia, pomp and circumstance of an emperor have no meaning if the emperor himself is missing from the throne.

All means of salvation become more effective or enhanced in their value if they are accompanied by Lord Ram's holy Name. All other Mantras and spiritual practices have their importance and effect only when they are sanctified by first invoking the holy Name of Lord Ram. Otherwise they lose their strength and spiritual value, and instead become meaningless rituals.

All spiritual efforts that a creature undertakes would be useless and ineffective if they are not honoured by the presence of the Lord's holy Name. They are like food without salt. Any food becomes tasteless and unpalatable if a tiny amount of salt is not added to it. Similarly, all spiritual undertakings become boring and lusterless without the shine of Lord Ram's holy Name.]

11. नामु राम को कलपतरु कलि कल्यान निवासु ।
जो सुमिरत भयो भाँग तें तुलसी तुलसीदासु ॥

11. nāmu rāma kō kalapatāru kali kalyāna nivāsu.
jō sumirata bhayō bhām̐ga tēr̥m tulasī tulasīdāsu..

In Kaliyug, Lord Ram's holy Name is like a Kalpataru (the all wish-fulfilling celestial tree of Gods), and it is like a treasury of all auspiciousness and welfare. It is benefactor of all the living beings in every possible way.

Tulsidas was as worthless as Bhaang (a hallucination producing herb called Tetra hydro – cannabis sativa) early in his life, but when he started chanting or repeating the Lord's holy Name 'Ram' he was transformed into a worthy person who is as venerated and respected by the society as the holy Tulsi plant (the holy Basil plant). (11)

[The comparison is symbolic. If one reads the life of Tulsidas he will come to know that this great saint was born in a very inauspicious moment. The configuration of stars indicated that his parents would die soon. Soon after his birth his mother died, and the foster mother who had adopted the helpless child died too. His father abandoned this inauspicious son, and Tulsidas had to beg from house to house to feed his stomach even in the early stage of life when he was merely six to seven years old. He was reviled by his family and the society at large. They treated him with disdain like a sober man treats Bhaang or any other herb that produces hallucinations. But when the same Tulsidas took the refuge of Lord Ram and started repeating the Lord's holy Name he became a colossus amongst all his peer saints, and got more acclaim than any of them. Even today, the name of Tulsidas is taken with the greatest of respect in India, and he is regarded as a personified form of the virtue of Bhakti (devotion, dedication) for the Supreme Being who incarnated as Lord Ram.

As compared to Bhaang which is despised in the scriptures and is to be avoided in all religious affairs, the Tulsi is regarded as very holy and dear to Lord Vishnu whose physical incarnation was Lord Ram. The leaves of the Tulsi plant are used to sanctify food offered to the Lord, but the leaves of the Bhaang are treated as being defiling and polluting the same food.

The main thrust of this comparison is to stress the importance and significance of Lord Ram's holy Name as compared to all other Mantras and spiritual formulas in existence.]

12. राम नाम जपि जीहँ जन भए सुकृत सुखमालि ।
तुलसी इहाँ जो आलसी गयो आजु की कालि ।।

12. rāma nāma japi jīham̐ jana bha'e sukr̥ta sukhamāli.
tulasī ihām̐ jō ālasī gayō āju kī kālī..

Tulsidas says that by doing Japa (repeating or chanting)¹ Lord Ram's holy Name with the tongue, people have become purified, most happy and contented. But those who are lazy in chanting the name are bound to get ruined and face all sorts of horrors sooner or later. (12)

[¹'Japa' can be done by the tongue because it is the only instrument of the body which allows a person to speak. Tulsidas says that a person never tires of speaking on so many subjects related to this world and life in it, but when it comes to doing Japa with the holy Name of Lord Ram people get weary, become bored, and begin to yawn. How stupid they are, he says. There are umpteen numbers of instances when a Jiva, a living being, has attained the highest spiritual stature by simply relying upon this

single Mantra—the holy Name of Lord Ram. Some of the instances are sage Valmiki, the crow saint Kaagbhusund, the vulture Jatau, the low-caste woman Sabari, Ajaamil, the child devotees Prahalad and Dhruva, the celestial sage Narad, etc. Even Lord Shiva who is considered as the most enlightened God relies upon Lord Ram's holy Name to obtain eternal bliss and spiritual enlightenment.

All other means of spiritual attainment require effort and energy, but repeating the Lord's holy Name 'Ram' by the tongue is so easy and effective. But still the creature feels lazy to do so. Tulsidas admonishes them and says that it is the easiest thing to do in this world—the name can be repeated anywhere, anytime and under any circumstance. Even an illiterate person can repeat the word "Ram" with as much ease as a wise and learned man. Hence, this holy Name of the Lord is a panacea of spiritual welfare that is available to all the living beings just like the sunshine that does not discriminate between any two entities but gives light and energy to the entire world with equanimity and impartiality.]

13. नाम गरीबनिवाज को राज देत जन जानि ।
तुलसी मन परिहरत नहिं घुर बिनिआ की बानि ॥

13. nāma garībanivāja kō rāja dēta jana jāni.
tulasī mana pariharata nahim ghura bini'ā kī bāni..

Tulsidas says the name of Lord Ram is such a magnanimous benefactor and a benevolent giver that it liberally and without reservations gives the kingdom of the world to those who chant or repeat it (i.e. it gives salvation and emancipation to the soul of those who repeat the holy Name of the Lord without discrimination), thinking them to be loyal followers and devotees of the Lord. But this mind is such a miserable wretch and a un-believer that it does not abandon its habit of searching grains in a rubbish heap (i.e. it seeks pleasure in base elements and sense objects of this world.) (13)

[The word 'ghura bini'ā' refers to the hen that has the habit of digging into heap of rubbish in search of grains even if it is fed properly and pampered like a favourite pet. The mind of a creature is like this greedy hen because inspite of having access to the holy Name of Lord Ram which can fulfill all its needs it still prefers to dwell on mundane subjects of this mortal and deluding world of sense objects though it known very well that this world and its objects can never give it eternal peace and happiness.]

14. कासीं बिधि बसि तनु तजें हठि तनु तजें प्रयाग ।
तुलसी जो फल सो सुलभ राम नाम अनुराग ॥

14. kāsīm bidhi basi tanu tajēm haṭhi tanu tajēm prayāga.
tulasī jō phala sō sulabha rāma nāma anurāga..

Tulsidas says that the spiritual fruit in the form of Moskha (emancipation and salvation) of soul which one obtains by living a righteous way of life and then dying in Kashi (Varanasi), or by leaving the mortal body forcefully (i.e. by doing severe penances and austerities, collectively called Tapa or hard spiritual practices) in Prayag

(Allahabad; Triveni)—the same spiritual reward can be obtained very easily by having love, devotion and affection for Lord Ram's holy Name without having to undertake so strict and rigours methods. (14)

[To wit, the Moksha that one obtains in these famous pilgrim places by observing strict codes of conduct and religious vows is as easily available to a spiritual aspirant if he simply takes the shelter of Lord Ram's holy Name. If he does so, then he need not even spend any time at these places, or for that matter in any other holy place or observing any other sanctified religious process, for this benefit can easily be obtained by simply repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram at the place where the aspirant is residing at present, and in the circumstance where he has to live in this world.

The holy Name of Lord Ram needs no special preparations and religious observations to be effective. Rather, it is the foundation upon which all other methods for spiritual liberation and deliverance, as well as happiness and peace of the soul depend.

Kashi is called the Avimukta Kshetra—i.e. the terrestrial realm which has the mystical ability to provide the creature his liberation and deliverance. This ability comes from a boon which Lord Shiva obtained from Lord Ram according to which Lord Shiva was granted the authority and power to provide liberation to the soul of all those who die in Kashi by uttering the holy Name 'Ram' in the ears of the dying creature. So, in the final analysis the actual Mukti (liberation and deliverance) or Moksha (emancipation and salvation) is granted by the holy Name 'Ram' of the Lord. Prayag is also called Triveni because it is the confluence of three holiest rivers of India—viz. Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati. They represent Lord Vishnu who is the protector and sustainer of creation, Yam who is the God of Death that is represented by Lord Shiva, and Brahma who is the creator of the visible world. These three deities represent the Trinity Gods, and in turn represent the entire cycle of birth and death—i.e. creation, its development and growth, and its final conclusion. A person who does Tapa here is able to transcend these three phases of creation by burning all his spiritual impurities in the fire of austerity and penances (Tapa) which ultimately helps to cleanse and purify his inner self known as the Atma, and thereby become equivalent to the Supreme Self known as Brahm or the Parmatma.

Tulsidas says that the same objective is fulfilled much more easily by repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram—i.e. the word Mantra 'Ram'.]

15. मीठो अरु कठवति भरो रौंताई अरु छेम ।
स्वारथ परमारथ सुलभ राम नाम के प्रेम ॥

15. mīṭhō aru kaṭhavati bharō rauntā'ī aru chēma.
svāratha paramāratha sulabha rāma nāma kē prēma..

Having sweets, and that even by the bowlful, having the rights, powers and authority of a king but abstain from having ego, pride and pleasures that are associated with and integral to being a king, and simultaneously having the benefit of enjoying the comforts and pleasures of this material world of sense objects as well as being able to obtain welfare and liberation of the soul—Tulsidas says it is impossible to have these two contradictory benefits or rewards simultaneously. But the glory, the mystical

power and the authority of Lord Ram's holy Name is such that it makes it possible for the living being to obtain all the rewards together and at the same time. (15)

[To wit, even that which is considered impossible becomes possible on the strength of Lord Ram's holy Name. Good fortunes come to him in abundance like the bowl full of sweets. He enjoys the greatest of physical comforts and happiness like the ones enjoyed by kings, but his Atma or soul remains free from the sin of being engrossed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of the material sense objects of the world and remaining indulgent in self gratification like the king does. In spite of being able to live and enjoy all the comforts and pleasures afforded in this material world he still becomes eligible to get Mukti (liberation and deliverance) of the soul. His soul is never trapped in sins and the quagmire known as the world.]

16. राम नाम सुमिरत सुजस भाजन भए कुजाति ।
कुतरुक सुरुपुर राजमग लहत भुवन बिख्याति ॥

16. rāma nāma sumirata sujasa bhājana bha'ē kujāti.
kutaruka surupura rājamaga lahata bhuvana bikhyāti..

By remembering Lord Ram's holy Name, even lowly and unfortunate people (i.e. those of low birth such as Ganika and Ajaamil) became eligible for good fame, honour, respect and the best of luck and fortunes in this world. Worthless trees that line the route to heaven¹ (such as the trees near the bank of the holy river Ganges that is supposed to pave a soul's way to heaven) become famous and worthy of admiration in the three worlds (called the 'Tribhuvan'). (16)

[¹This route to heaven has only symbolic value. These trees are used as a metaphor to imply that even worthless creatures who take the shelter of Lord Ram and his holy Name become respected in the society and given high honour much like those who are renowned for their high knowledge and wisdom or for their stature in society obtained by a number of factors, such as their noble birth and worldly accomplishments.

The three worlds too have a symbolic meaning—i.e. the whole world.

Other possible meanings are the following—(a) Along the route to any place, there are three places where the itinerant traveler rests—(i) under the shade of the tree, (ii) near some water body, and (iii) a village or other inhabited area.

(b) Then again, the term 'three worlds' refer to the past life, the present life and the future life.

(c) Technically speaking, the three worlds are the terrestrial world, the nether world and the heavenly world.]

17. स्वारथ सुख सपनेहुँ अगम परमारथ न प्रबेस ।
राम नाम सुमिरत मिटहिं तुलसी कठिन कलेस ॥

17. svāratha sukha sapanēhum' agama paramāratha na prabēsa.
rāma nāma sumirata miṭahim tulasī kaṭhina kalēsa..

Tulsidas says that those who are so unfortunate that they neither have the minimum level of happiness or joy in this mundane world even in their dreams, nor do they have entry on the path of salvation and emancipation leading to the attainment of final spiritual bliss—even they can eliminate their miseries, agonies, torments and sufferings by remembering Lord Ram's holy Name.

[These sufferings may relate either to their existential circumstances in this mortal world or their spiritual welfare. Both are taken well care of if such unfortunate persons take the shelter of Lord Ram's holy Name.] (17)

18. मोर मोर सब कहँ कहसि तू को कहु निज नाम ।
कै चुप साधहि सुनि समुझि कै तुलसी जपु राम ॥

18. mōra mōra saba kaham̐ kahasi tū kō kahu nija nāma.
kai cupa sādahi suni samujhi kai tulasī japu rāma..

[Addressing the common man who is not aware of the spiritual truths, who is surrounded by delusions and is ignorant of the reality of this world as well as his own 'self', Tulsidas says—]

You call every one 'mine' in this mortal and deluding world. Well, tell me who you are, and what your real name is¹?

Tulsidas tells such an ignorant and deluded man—'Either you should realise your 'true self' (stop differentiating between myself and yourself), and having thus become truly 'realised and enlightened' you must keep quiet and turn inwards towards the Lord known as the Parmatma who resides within you as your Atma, or you should simply chant Lord Ram's holy Name (as the easier way out of this spiritual debate and moral dilemma)². (18)

[¹Here, Tulsidas is speaking the greatest of truths enunciated in the Upanishads about the true nature of the 'self' and the world. Briefly, the scriptures say that the living beings 'true self' is not the gross body which is visible to the world, but it is the Atma, the soul, which is pure consciousness. This Atma is the same in each living being that exists in this world. The Atma is the only entity that is the 'Truth', the reason being that 'Truth' is eternal, infinite, unchangeable, steady and imperishable, and this Atma possesses all these qualities, while the rest of the world, including the gross body in which this Atma lives, has the opposite characters—it is perishable, limited, gross and subject to change from the instant it is born. Therefore, the world is 'not the truth'. The man is so foolish that he calls this untrue world as 'mine' and neglects the 'truthful Atma' as being non-existent. What more stupid can he be?

There is another reason why Tulsidas admonishes the him. The gross body is not the truthful identity of the person because it is the Atma that is his 'true self'. This Atma is the same in all the living beings as stated above. Then is it not foolish to call one person as mine and the other person as not mine?

If the word 'mine' is used to mean the material things of the world then the level of stupidity is of the extreme kind. These things are as inanimate, gross, transient and perishable as the world itself. They are more worthless than the body which harbours the Atma because the body at least has 'life' in the form of the Atma living inside it, something the material things lack.

²The first path stated here is the path of ‘Gyan’ or the path of knowledge and wisdom acquired by deep study of the scriptures, understanding their essence and then following the strict method prescribed by them to realise the Atma and its relation with the Supreme Atma known as the Parmatma. If successful in this path, the aspirant would realise that the Atma residing in his bosom is not only his ‘truthful self’ but also the Parmatma who is the Supreme Being and the Holy Spirit. If the Parmatma is the cosmic Being or the cosmic Soul or the cosmic Consciousness, then the individual’s Atma is the microcosmic counterpart of this Parmatma.

The path shown by the scriptures involves many steps, such as for instance doing Yoga and Dhyan—i.e. doing meditation and contemplation. Mantras are needed to focus the mind and harness the cosmic energy in one’s spiritual practices. It is not that easy as it seems, for there are very rigid methods if one is to be successful in them. The many paths prescribed by the scriptures require the spiritual aspirant to observe so many difficult sacraments, religious vows, observances and strictures that they create a huge block for him and act as more of a deterrent in his spiritual progress instead of coming to his help. As compared to them, the path of having devotion for Lord Ram and repeating his holy Name is very easy as it has no restrictions and rigidity associated with any of the other paths. One can repeat the name ‘Ram’ anytime and any where in this world.

Ram is the Parmatma or the Supreme Being referred to in the scriptures in a manifested form. The labyrinth of Mantras is taken care of by the simple name of the Lord, i.e. ‘Ram’. In comparison to complicated Mantras that are difficult to pronounce, the word ‘Ram’ is very easy and convenient.

Tulsidas advises the common man by saying that if he is not sure of himself and do not have the mental aptitude or level of intelligence to grasp the profound truths preached by the scriptures, then he should not worry because an easy and hassle-free spiritual path is available to him. And this path is to take the shelter of Lord Ram’s holy Name. When a man does so he would not need to spend his time and energy to understand the complicated doctrines and philosophies enunciated by the Upanishads and the other scriptures in order to unravel the truth hidden in them, but get the same benefit very easily by repeating the holy Name of the Lord, i.e. the word ‘Ram’. This word is deemed to be the panacea of all spiritual ills and is a powerful Mantra or spiritual formula that would have the same spiritual effects that comes by understanding the essence of the scriptures and repeating long-winding hymns and texts.

The main reason why a man studies the scriptures is that he wishes to find the ‘truth’ of the world and his own self as explained in them, and to attain liberation from the endless cycle of birth and death and their attendant miseries and torments by taking the path prescribed in these scriptures. The scriptures are voluminous and cumbersome and require an expert to be properly interpreted and explained. They are like a labyrinth which more often than not become entangling. Tulsidas wonders why would a man wish to get himself entangled in their web when he is telling him the essence and the truth in simple language—and it is to take the shelter of Lord Ram, the Parmatma, the Supreme Atma, and repeat his holy Name as the Mantra for spiritual well-being.

The term ‘Parmatma’ literally means ‘the supreme transcendental Atma, the cosmic Consciousness, the supreme Soul, the divine and supreme Holy Spirit, the Supreme Being’. Parmatma is the supreme transcendental Soul, while Atma is the individual soul of the creature. It is the ‘Parmatma’, the cosmic Soul at the macro level of the creation that has revealed or manifested itself as the individual soul of the

creature as his Atma at the micro level of this creation. This can be visualised by a simple example—the drop of water in the tumbler is the Atma of the creature, while the body of water in the fathomless and measureless ocean is the Parmatma.

The term Parmatma has been explained in—(i) The Niralamb Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition, verse nos. 7-8; (ii) Atharva Veda's Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, verse no. 4; (iii) The Tejobindu Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 4, verse nos. 41-42.]

19. हम लखि लखहि हमार लखि हम हमार के बीच ।
तुलसी अलखहि का लखहि राम नाम जप नीच ॥

19. hama lakhi lakhahi hamāra lakhi hama hamāra kē bīca.
tulasī alakhahi kā lakhahi rāma nāma japa nīca..

[Addressing a mystic who chanted 'Alakha', meaning an entity that is not visible and referring to the Supreme Being who has no form and attributes, Tulsidas admonishes him, saying :-]

Oh you Mystic! First you must understand the true nature and form of your own 'self', and it is only then that you become eligible to talk about invisible and formless 'Parmatma', the Supreme Being, to whom you refer by using the term 'Alakha'. After that, recognise the 'Maya' (delusions) that separates your 'true self' and Brahm. Oh you wretched! How can you understand or comprehend the Supreme Being who is invisible and unknown without first understanding these three entities—the truth about your own 'self', the truth about Brahm, and the effects of Maya. Hence, chant Lord Ram's holy Name instead of shouting 'Alakha', literally meaning 'the one who cannot be seen'. (19)

[Tulsidas admonishes the mystic and says that he goes about shouting 'Alakha' as if he has known the truth of the Supreme Being known as the Parmatma, the supreme Atma or the cosmic Soul of creation who cannot be seen as he is beyond the reach of the senses of perception. To know the Parmatma is not that easy as it seems. The mystic does not even know what his true 'self' is, and therefore he has no right to preach about the supreme Self of this creation.

From the metaphysical point of view, the truthful 'self' of a living being—called the Jiva—is his Atma which is pure consciousness. This individual Atma is a microcosmic form of the supreme Atma which is the Cosmic Consciousness known as the Parmatma. Both the 'Atma' and the 'Parmatma' are the same; the only difference is in the plane of existence. Whereas the Jiva has a gross body and a gross existence, the Parmatma is subtle and formless. But the 'consciousness' that is called the Atma or the soul is the same in both the cases. Both the Atma and the Parmatma are 'Alakh'—i.e. they cannot be seen. The Maya is that delusion which separates the Atma from the Parmatma; the Jiva begins to treat himself as separate from the Parmatma under the influence of the Maya.

So Tulsidas basically says that a mystic who goes on his rounds shouting 'Alakh' as if he has come to know the Supreme Being who is invisible is actually deceiving himself as the people around him. Will he tell truthfully if he has seen the Atma that is residing in his own bosom? Well then, if he cannot see something so close, he has no right to claim to have seen or known an entity that is beyond the

reach of the mind and its organs of perception—such as the eye that sees, the skin which feels, the nose that smells, the tongue that tastes, and the ears that hear.]

20. राम नाम अवलंब बिनु परमारथ की आस ।
बरषत बारिद बूँद गहि चाहत चढ़न अकास ॥

20. rāma nāma avalamba binu paramāratha kī āsa.
baraṣata bārīda būṁḍa gahi cāhata caṛhana akāsa..

Those who expect their emancipation and salvation without taking the refuge of Lord Ram's holy Name are trying to ascend to the sky by holding the falling rain drops.

[To wit, as it is impossible to rise to the sky astride falling rain drops, so it is equally impossible to attain emancipation and salvation without repeating and taking the aid of Lord Ram's holy Name.] (20)

[Note—In this context Tulsidas says in his book of prayers called the ‘Vinai Patrika’, in its verse no. 66 and 129 amongst others, that no other mean is successful in providing spiritual liberation and liberation to the creature if that mean is not accompanied by the holy Name of Lord Ram. In other words, the word ‘Ram’ is the key to all spiritual welfare and attainments. Without this ‘master key’ the treasury of spiritual well being cannot be opened.]

21. तुलसी हठि हठि कहत नित चित सुनि हित करि मानि ।
लाभ राम सुमिरन बड़ो बड़ी बिसारें हानि ॥

21. tulasī haṭhi haṭhi kahata nita cita suni hita kari māni.
lābha rāma sumirana baṛō baṛī bisārēm hāni..

Tulsidas addresses his mind and sub-conscious (Chitta) with earnest sincerity, and advises them—‘Oh my Chitta! Listen to what I say as something that is most beneficial for you and the best path that would provide for your welfare. Remembering Lord Ram is the greatest profit (benefit, reward or fruit of any endeavour) that you can ever have, and forgetting the Lord is the biggest loss for you and the biggest mistake you will ever make. So pay heed to me and focus yourself (i.e. attention of the mind and the sub-conscious) on Lord Ram’s holy form and divine Name.’ (21)

[Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-9 that precedes Doha 112; and Vinai Patrika, verse no. 67.]

22. बिगरी जनम अनेक की सुधरै अबहीं आजु ।
होहि राम को नाम जपु तुलसी तजि कुसमाजु ॥

22. bigarī janama anēka kī sudharai abahīm āju.
hōhi rāma kō nāma japu tulasī taji kusamāju..

Tulsidas advises a seeker: 'You should abandon all bad company and thought from your mind, and instead you should identify yourself with Lord Ram (i.e. surrender yourself to Ram) and repeat the Lord's divine Name. By doing so, all the accumulated bad effects of the deeds done by you in so many previous births can be rectified immediately and instantly.' (22)

[Refer Vinai Patrika verse no. 193. The 'bad company and bad thought' are those that keep the creature entangled in the web of this deluding world and eclipsed in the darkness of ignorance. Such a creature remains permanently trapped in the cesspool of birth and death and their attendant horrors.

If, however, such a creature is wise enough to take the shelter of Lord Ram and his holy Name then his liberation and deliverance from this quagmire is assured.]

23. प्रीति प्रतीति सुरीति सों राम राम जपु राम ।
तुलसी तेरो है भलो आदि मध्य परिनाम ।।

23. prīti pratīti surīti sōm rāma rāma japu rāma.
tulasī tērō hai bhalō ādi madhya parināma..

Tulsidas says that one should do Japa¹ (repetition) of Lord Ram's holy Name with great faith, intense love, a high level of devotion and a firm conviction, as well as according to the prescribed method, because by doing so one will have all-round welfare and access to all types of good fortunes in the present time, in the middle of the future, and even in the distant future. (23)

[Refer also to verse no. 228 of the book of prayers of Tulsidas, called 'Vinai Patrika'.

¹Japa—The general meaning and understanding of the word 'Japa' is 'constant repetition of any holy name of the God or any divine word or Mantra'. This verse tells us that if that is not possible for a man, or if he is not interested in it, then the next best option for him is to read good books. This will have similar good effects on his mind as doing 'Japa'. Because if the mind is not kept busy, it will gravitate towards corrupt and pervert thinking; it cannot sit idle. If it is not possible to leash it by means of chanting or repetition of 'Mantras', then at least it should be reined in by reading good books instead of allowing it to wander aimlessly here and there like a vagrant indulging in useless roaming about. Remember, an idle mind is the workshop of devil. Refer: Trishikhi Brahmno-panishad, verse nos. 2/28-34 of Shukla Yajur Veda in this context.

The Shandilya Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, section 2 says that Japa is one of the ten Niyams or spiritual observances that any spiritual aspirant should practice. It then defines Japa and its types as follows—"Japa is to honestly practice (repeat and meditate upon) the Vedic Mantra (hymn) that has been prescribed by one's Guru (moral preceptor). Japa is done in two ways—one is verbal or audible, and the other is non-verbal or mental or silent. The mental or silent form of Japa is done by repeating the Mantra mentally in a silent mode without uttering a word audibly, and involves concentration of the mind and turning its thoughts

inwards. The verbal or audible form of Japa is again of two types—viz. one that is done loudly and the other that is simply muttered. The Japa done while muttering the Mantras is thousands of times more beneficial than doing Japa loudly, and mental Japa that is done silently is far better than even the one done by slowly muttering and it's multiple times more beneficial.”

The importance and benefits of doing Japa has been emphasized in the Atharva Veda's Gopal Purva Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 16 as follows—“Those devotees who do Japa (repetition) with the holy Mantra of the Lord having five steps and eighteen letters by prefixing them with the ethereal salutary word ‘OM’ standing for the supreme transcendental Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness¹, are the ones to whom the Lord voluntarily reveals his true divine and holy form in the form of the cosmic Consciousness known as the Atma. That is, such persons become self-realised and enlightened. This is also tantamount to Brahm-realisation.

Hence, those who are desirous of finding liberation and deliverance from the fetters that shackle them to this delusory, mortal and entrapping world are advised to do Japa with this holy Mantra.’ (16).

The word ‘Japa’ is derived from the root word ‘jap’ meaning to utter. Hence, doing Japa means to utter or repeat the different Mantra which are spiritual formulas in the form of sounds, syllables, letters, words, phrases or sentences such as complete hymns that have a high level of cosmic spiritual energy inherent in them.

The Bhagvat Gita, 10/25 considers Japa as a manifestation of the Lord God (or the worshipped deity) himself.

Japa has three forms—(i) When the Mantras are said aloud it is called ‘Vaikhari Japa’ or ‘Vaachika Japa’. (ii) When the Mantras are inaudible and merely uttered or whispered, the Japa is called ‘Upaamshu’. And (iii) when it is done mentally without opening the mouth, the Japa is called ‘Maansika’.

Further, there are different classes of Japa depending upon their usage as follows—

(i) Nitya Japa—that Japa which is done daily and regularly.

(ii) Naimittik Japa—that Japa which is done on special occasions—such as on the days of eclipses or special worship days.

(iii) Kaamya Japa—that Japa which is done for the fulfillment of certain desires—such as acquisition of wealth or success in any endeavour.

(iv) Praayaschita Japa—that Japa which is done as a penance, for repentance or for expiation of sins.

(v) Ajapaa-Japa—that which is done along with the passage of breath through the body as inhalation and exhalation. Usually the Hans Mantra is used for this by acclaimed ascetics.

(vi) Vilom Japa—that Japa in which the Mantra is repeated in the reverse order. This sort of Japa is usually done to counter the negative effects of black magic rites.

(vii) Likhit Japa—that Japa in which the Mantras are written down on paper. Since each Mantra has a Rishi (one who first witnessed the revelation of the particular Mantra and experienced its profound effects), a Chanda (poetical style), and a Devta (the deity to whom the Mantra is dedicated), the devotee is required to pay his homage to all of them before starting to repeat the Mantra or do Japa.

Usually a prayer rosary is used to do Japa, but when one has become spiritually uplifted or has practices doing Japa over a long period of time the need for the rosary is not felt. Then the Japa becomes automatic and natural to him.]

24. दंपति रस रसना दसन परिजन बदन सुगेह ।
तुलसी हर हित बरन सिसु संपति सहज सनेह ॥

24. dampati rasa rasanā dasana parijana badana sugēha.
tulasī hara hita barana sisu sampati sahaja sanēha..

[Tulsidas describes a wise man's life in a metaphoric way—] The sweet taste of Lord Ram's holy Name (i.e. the sense of euphoria and exhilaration that comes by saying it) and the tongue (which says the Name) are like husband and wife, the teeth are like the relatives, the mouth is a beautiful home, Lord Shiva's beloved two syllables 'Ra' and 'Ma' (of the holy Name 'Raam') are like two adorable children, and natural affection towards them (Ra + Ma) is the wealth of a person.

[To wit, a wise man who seeks liberation and deliverance from this world inspite of having to live in it to fulfill his obligations can easily do so by taking refuge in the name of the Lord, and repeating this holy Name which would help him break free from all worldly fetters even without his knowing of them. A man who repeats the holy Name of Lord Ram leads a happy and contented life like a householder who is so fortunate that he has a compatible and obedient wife, two adorable sons, well placed, respectable and cooperative relatives, and a home and hearth of which he is proud and where he finds peace and happiness.] (24)

[Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 10; Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 20; Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 22; Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108; and Uttar Kand, Doha no. 46. (ii) Vinai Patrika verse nos. 129, 170, 237.

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 10—"The Lord's holy Name 'RAM' is the most gracious and benevolent element in the entire pantheon of words and letters that constitute literature and the spoken word. This 'Name' is the holiest and most divine letter, and this fact is endorsed and reiterated by the scriptures such as the Vedas and the Purans. It is the cause of all goodness, auspiciousness and good fortunes on the one hand, and the eliminator of the opposite circumstances. The wise god, Lord Shiva, and goddess Uma, his divine consort, therefore repeat this holy Name."

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 20 says "the two letters of the Lord's name, viz. 'Ra' and 'Ma', are like the two eyes for the entire language consisting of letters or alphabets." That is, even as one cannot see the world without the eyes, true knowledge contained in the scriptures cannot be known without having faith and devotion for the Lord known by his holy Name 'Ram'. This is because all the scriptures, whether written or taught, are based on letters, and if the body of the knowledge symbolized by the scriptures loses its eye it cannot enable the person to see what is contained in them.

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 22 asserts "ascetics repeat the holy Name of the Lord, i.e. the word 'Ram', to remain spiritually awake in the darkness of the night symbolized by this world of delusions".

In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108, goddess Parvati, the divine consort of Shiva, wonders why Lord Shiva always repeats the holy Name 'Ram' when she says—"Oh Lord, you repeat the name 'Ram-Ram' day and night without break; what is the mystery behind it?"

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 46, Lord Ram has himself answered this basic question. He says “he who is completely submerged in the thoughts of my divine virtues and glories, who remains ever engrossed in repeating my divine Name, and who has abandoned all worldly taints as Mamta (attachments), Mada (arrogance, hypocrisy, pride and vanity) and Moha (delusions, infatuations for the material sense objects of the world as well as the body)—verily, they are the ones who experience what is known as truthful and the highest kind of spiritual bliss and happiness”.]

25. बरषा रितु रघुपति भगति तुलसी सालि सुदास ।
रामनाम बर बरन जुग सावन भादव मास ॥

25. baraṣā ritu raghupati bhagati tulasī sāli sudāsa.
rāmanāma bara barana juga sāvana bhāḍava māsa..

Tulsidas says that devotion for Lord Ram is like the rainy season, the best devotees and followers of the Lord are the grains, and the two syllables 'Ra' and 'Ma' of Lord Ram's holy Name are the two Hindu months of Saawan and Bhaadon.

[Even as the grains sown during the rainy season consisting of these two months of Saawan and Bhaadon yield rich harvest, the devotee too gets immense pleasure, peace, happiness and rich benefits in spiritual terms by devotionally chanting Ram's holy Name. Just like a good harvest brings cheer to the farmer and the society at large, repeating Lord Ram's holy Name brings cheer to the soul of the devotee as well as to the rest of the society which hears this divine Name.] (25)

[This Doha appears in the Ram Charit Manas as Doha no. 19 of Baal Kand. Refer also to: Vinai Patrika verse no. 221.]

26. राम नाम नर केसरी कनककसिपु कलिकाल ।
जापक जन प्रह्लाद जिमि पालिहि दलि सुरसाल ॥

26. rāma nāma nara kēsārī kanakakasipu kalikāla.
jāpaka jana prahalāda jimi pālihi dali surasāla..

Lord Ram's holy Name is like a Man-Lion (an incarnation of God, called Narsingh) and Kali (a personified form of the present Hindu era called Kali-yuga) is the demon named Hiranya-Kasipu. Even as the Man-Lion crushed (killed) the demon who was tormenting the devotee Prahalad (to abandon his devotion for the Lord), the Name of the Lord can destroy all evil forces tormenting the devotees. (26)

[This Doha also appears in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand as its Doha no. 27. Please refer to section no. 1.1 of this Chapter no. 1.]

27. राम नाम कलि कामतरु राम भगति सुरधेनु ।
सकल सुमंगल मूल जग गुरुपद पंकज रेनु ॥

27. rāma nāma kali kāmataru rāma bhagati suradhēnu.
sakala sumaṅgala mūla jaga gurupada paṅkaja rēnu..

In the era of Kali¹, Lord Ram's holy Name is like the all wish fulfilling tree called the Kaam Taru (i.e. the Kalpa Tree) which can give the desired fruits (benefits) to the devotee². Devotion for the Lord is like the all wish fulfilling Surdhenu (also known as the Kamdhenu cow which is the celestial cow of Gods that also fulfills all desires) for him³, and the dust from the feet of the Guru⁴ (wise, moral teacher) is the root of all spiritual welfare and good fortunes (i.e. good luck and auspiciousness) for him (the devotee). (27)

[¹Kaliyug is the fourth of the four epoch Hindu cycle of creation and destruction.

The four Yugs are the following four eras or phases or epochs of one cycle of creation and destruction—the first is the Sata-yug, the second is the Treta-yug, the third is the Dwapar-yug, and the fourth is the current Kali-yug.

The Satayug which was the great Vedic period of fire sacrifices, the Tretayug culminated with the incarnation of Lord Ram, the Dwaparyug ended with Lord Krishna's incarnation, and the Kaliyug would end with the great deluge or Doomsday when the entire world would be drowned in water. The next Kalpa would come after that in a cyclic form. This happens because at the fag end of Kaliyug, sins and evils would have reached such a crescendo that the Supreme Being no longer is able to tolerate it though he is most tolerant, magnanimous and forgiving, and decides to finally wind up the whole thing by punishing the world by clean sweeping the slate. Only the righteous and auspicious few survive who would become the progenitors of the next cycle.

The Satayug is also called Kritiyug because elaborate fire sacrifices were done during this phase. It is equivalent to 4800 divine years of Gods, and 17,28,000 human years.

The Tretayug is equivalent to 3600 divine years of Gods, and 12,96,000 human years.

The Dwaparyug is equivalent to 2400 divine years of Gods, and 8,64,000 human years.

The Kaliyug is equivalent to 1200 divine years of Gods, and 4,32,000 human years.

²Kalpa Tree—refer: Doha nos. 11, 28 and 183. Also: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 27. Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 36. Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 27 says “in the era known as Kali-yug (the present period of time), the Lord's holy Name ‘Ram’ is a fulfiller of all wishes and desires; it ensures well-being even after death; and is like one's loving and caring parent in this world”.

³Surdhenu—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 and 9-10 that precede Doha no. 120; Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 114.

⁴The Guru—Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 1; and Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 2.

Now, let us see briefly the significance of a Guru and who he actually is. Who is a true Guru? This is a question which has baffled many a scholars. The word ‘Guru’ simply means a person who is one’s teacher—be it in the field of knowledge that pertains to the world or the field that relates to the spiritual. He is the person who makes a person acquire knowledge that he did not have earlier.

The Upanishads explain the term Guru in detail and list the virtues that a wise and enlightened Guru is supposed to possess. They also outline the characteristics that a good disciple must have, and how best one can choose a good Guru.

The word Guru has two parts—viz. ‘Gu’ meaning darkness, and ‘Ru’ meaning light. Hence the word ‘Guru’ means a person who can remove the darkness symbolising ignorance and illusions that has engulfed the disciple from all sides and act as a hindrance or an obstacle in his emancipation and salvation by showing him the truthful path, or lighting his path with the light of knowledge and holding out his hands to support him when he falters. Therefore he is an exalted, revered and much sought after person who can remove the darkness of ignorance of his follower by showing him the light of knowledge and guides him whenever he finds himself in a moral dilemma and quandary. He is the person who is both the moral preceptor as well as the spiritual guide of his disciple. He is supposed to act as a neutral advisor to his ward in all matters temporal and spiritual. The disciple is expected to confide in him his greatest of secrets without the fear of betrayal or blackmail. He is the one who is expected to have risen above all kinds of vested interests and keeps the welfare of the disciple as his main objective. He is the one who has transcended the mundane and has acquired sublime awareness of the supreme Reality, because only those who are themselves aware of anything can hope to tell others about it. Therefore it is deemed that only a person of high mental, intellectual, spiritual and ethical caliber can become a true Guru.

A true Guru is treated as being equivalent to the ‘Trinity Gods’—(1) Brahma, the creator, because he creates or helps to take birth good virtues and noble qualities in his disciple; (2) Vishnu, the sustainer, because he nourishes, sustains and helps to inculcate and develop wisdom and enlightenment in his disciple and leads him on the truthful path; and (3) Shiva, the concluder, because he helps to end, conclude and eliminate ignorance and negative traits in his disciple. He is ‘God like’ because he functions in all these capacities at the same time, besides being exalted in all knowledge, being virtuous, of high moral character and beyond reproach, being a source of unbound spiritual energy, being self realised and enlightened, and being eternal in the sense that what he advises to his disciple, the path he shows, the light that he lights in the dark heart of the creature, makes him immortal. The Rudra Upanishad, verse no. 3 explicitly asserts that Lord Shiva is the universal Guru of all, and that the Guru is Shiva personified in this form.

Therefore, a Guru is honoured for the divine virtues that he represents and embodies, that he teaches and implements in his life, for the divinity, for the Lord and for the personification of the great teachings of the scriptures that he exemplifies.

When the teacher (Guru) is especially pleased with a particular student, he would naturally be inclined to pay more attention to him as compared to others. This is natural for him because he sees in this student a spark of great future, a soul who would sincerely and honestly carry forward the teacher’s legacy forward and make his teachings as well as his name and fame immortal. As for other less brilliant and devoted students, or those who are just mediocre and run-of-the-mill sort, the teacher has no such grand expectations from them. So he prefers to impart the best of education to his special and most-favoured student. The teacher would even unravel

top secrets to him because he is confident that this disciple would never misuse them and also understand these secrets correctly and properly. This relationship is just like a father of more than one son. The father would have a natural love for the son in whom he sees a bright future and from whom he expects the family's good name and fortune to get a boost as compared to those sons who are like blights on the family.

The Guru is regarded as a personification of the great knowledge of the scriptures (refer Tripadvibut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 5, paragraph no. 10), as well as Lord Maha Vishnu himself (refer Tripadvibut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 8, paragraph no. 17, 1st stanza). It is not his physical body that is of any value for veneration, for the eternal 'soul' and not the physical gross body is venerable.

The Bhavana Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its opening verse no. 1 emphasises the importance of true Guru and says that he is the primary source of Shakti (strength, energy, vitality, vigour and authority) for the spiritual aspirant and his primary advisor and moral support. The aspirant relies on the authority of the Guru and his knowledge to faithfully move ahead in a field which is still unknown to him and un-chartered by him, without the fear of going on the wrong path or falling prey to uncertainties.

The wise, learned and enlightened Guru (an illustrious moral preceptor, guide and teacher) is a true advisor and guide for a spiritual aspirant. He is the one who acts as the primary source of strength and support that empowers the person to move ahead on his spiritual path and ultimately attain success in his endeavours. He is the virtual 'Shakti' or source of energy, motivation, strength, power and authority that provides the necessary support, impetus and dynamism to all the efforts made by the aspirant to reach his goal in life successfully. But for this to materialize, the Guru himself should be an expert in his field, and inclined to helpful and supporting; he should be a teacher, a preceptor, a motivator, an advisor, a friend and a guide all rolled into one.]

28. राम नाम कलि कामतरु सकल सुमंगल कंद ।
सुमिरत करतल सिद्धि सब पग पग परमानंद ॥

28. rāma nāma kali kāmataru sakala sumaṅgala kanda.
sumirata karatala sid'dhi saba paga paga paramānanda..

Lord Ram's holy Name is like a Kalpa Tree (the celestial tree of Gods and provider of fruits in the form of wish fulfillment) in the era of Kali, and is the root (source) of all good fortunes. Remembrance of Lord Ram's Name provides all the renowned Siddhis¹ (mystical powers and abilities as well as successes and acclaim) to the person as if they are already present on one's palm (i.e. already available to the devotee). Such a devotee enjoys supreme and eternal form of bliss and spiritual ecstasy (known as Parmaanand) at each moment and at every step of the way in his life.² (28)

[¹The Siddhis—There are said to be various kinds of Siddhis numbering from nine to eight, or even two chief ones. The word means spiritual and mystical powers as well as great achievements that are not normally available to an ordinary creature. The term 'Siddhi' has been explained in a note of Doha no. 229 of this book.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 22. It says—"Spiritual aspirants repeat the holy Name of the Lord faithfully, with

due diligence, and with great concentration. By doing so they are able to acquire great mystical powers called the various Siddhis, such as Anima etc.”

This Doha appears in Ram Agya Prashnaawali of Tulsidas as verse no. 3/4/4.

²Parmaanand simply means ‘the supreme form of bliss and ecstasy’.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line no. 2 of Doha no. 223. It says “wherever, in whichever direction, the two brothers Ram and Laxman went, there was extreme bliss, joy and ecstasy all around”. This is said in the context of the two brothers’ touring the city of Janakpur where they had gone to attend the bow-breaking ceremony in connection with the marriage of Sita. The idea is that wherever the Lord goes, there is happiness and joy.]

29. जथा भूमि सब बीजमय नखत निवास अकास ।
राम नाम सब धरममय जानत तुलसीदास ।।

29. jathā bhūmi saba bījamaya nakhata nivāsa akāsa.
rāma nāma saba dharamamaya jānata tulasīdāsa..

Tulsidas knows the esoteric secret that Lord Ram's holy Name is richly embedded and endowed with all the grand, magnificent and eclectic virtues that come under the ambit of the term ‘Dharma’ (religion, probity, propriety, auspiciousness, righteousness, ethical conduct and goodness) like the earth which is richly provided with (i.e. contains) all types of seeds, and the sky which is full of countless stars.

[Just like the earth that contains numerous seeds or the sky that is dotted with numerous stars, Lord Ram's holy Name also possesses all the auspicious virtues that are collectively called Dharma. In other words, all the benefits of having good virtues and righteous qualities that one expects to acquire in this world can be had by simply having this one single ‘Name’ of the Lord as one’s priceless possession. All the virtuousness associated with Dharma will come automatically to a person who repeats the holy Name of Lord Ram.] (29)

[Refer: (i) Vinai Patrika verse no. 131, 226. (ii) Geetawali, Ayodhya Kand, verse no. 64. (iii) Kavitaawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 72.]

30. सकल कामना हीन जे राम भगति रस लीन ।
नाम सुप्रेम पियूष हृद तिन्हहुँ किए मन मीन ।।

30. sakala kāmanā hīna jē rāma bhagati rasa līna.
nāma suprēma piyūṣa hr̥da tin̥hahum̐ ki'ē mana mīna..

Those who have tasted the juice of Lord Ram's devotion and love without hankering for any type of desires are like a fish that floats in the pond of nectar and derives immense pleasure and bliss from it.

[This fish will not like to leave this pond of nectar for another pond of plain water. Similarly, one who has tasted the nectar of bliss, ecstasy, happiness and peace that comes with Lord Ram’s holy Name would never bargain it for anything else in this world.] (30)

[This Doha appears as Doha no. 22 of Baal Kand of the epic Ram Charit Manas.]

31. ब्रह्म राम तेँ नामु बड़ बर दायक बर दानि ।
राम चरित सत कोटि महँ लिय महेस जियँ जानि ।।

31. brahma rāma tēm nāmu baṛa bara dāyaka bara dāni.
rāma carita sata kōṭi maham̐ liya mahēsa jiyam̐ jāni..

The holy Name of Lord Ram is greater than and superior to Brahm (the Absolute Authority of creation and the Supreme Being) so much so that it bestows blessings even on those (Gods) who themselves are capable of giving boons to others. [In other words, the Gods derive their mystical powers and authority to grant boons to others by invoking Lord Ram's holy Name. It is this name that empowers them to bestow boons on other creatures. So Tulsidas wonders that if this is the case, then why should he not ask or request or seek from Lord Ram instead of wasting time and energy in attempting to appease the Gods who have no power of their own. Why not approach the Emperor (Lord Ram) directly instead of begging to junior courtiers (Gods).]

Wise as he is, Lord Shiva selected these two syllables (Ra and Ma) which constitute the Lord's holy Name 'Ram' out of 100 crore (millions of) verses comprising the story of Lord Ram in its myriad variations². (31)

[This is Doha no. 25 of Baal Kand of the epic Ram Charit Manas.]

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precedes Doha no. 23.

The term 'Brahm' refers to the Supreme Being also known as the Parmatma. He is invisible, formless and without attributes. The same Brahm has revealed or manifested as Lord Ram who has a known visible form with divine attributes.

Tulsidas says that while Brahm is too difficult to comprehend and an abstract entity, and Lord Ram in his physical form took birth and lived in Treta Yuga which was long ago, his divine Name exists even today amongst us and can be invoked at any instant of life. Whereas the presence of Lord Ram may not be feasible under all circumstances because the Lord had a physical gross body which is subjected to so many laws of Nature, the Lord's holy Name is ubiquitous, omnipresent and immanent in this creation just like Brahm who is also omnipresent and all-pervading. But whereas realisation of Brahm is a cumbersome process, the path of invoking the holy Name of the Lord is extremely easy and convenient. The name can be said at any time and under any circumstance with no effort at all.

Again, while attainment of Brahm requires employment of various Mantras as prescribed by the scriptures, the name of Lord Ram, i.e. the word 'Ram' is a Mantra itself. Since Lord Ram is Brahm personified, the Name 'Ram' is directly related to the Supreme Being. No other mediums are required to access the Lord except this single word 'Ram'.

²Refer: Vinai Patrika verse no. 254.]

32. सबरी गीध सुसेवकनि सुगति दीन्हि रघुनाथ ।

नाम उधारे अमित खल बेद बिदित गुन गाथ ।।

32. sabarī gīdha susēvakani sugati dīnhi raghunātha.
nāma udhārē amita khala bēda bidita guna gātha..

Raghunath (the Lord of king Raghu's dynasty; Lord Ram) gave immortality to only a few faithful servants (i.e. devotees) such as Sabari (a low caste woman) and Gidha (a vulture called Jatau), whereas his holy Name has delivered (liberated) numerous lowly and fallen ones – a fact that is well known and established in the Vedas, and these Vedas have unequivocally sung (extolled, lauded and honoured) the glory of Lord's holy Name. (32)

[This is Doha no. 24 of Baal Kand of Ram Charit Manas. For details, please see section no. 1.1 of Chapter no. 1 of this present Book.]

33. राम नाम पर नाम तें प्रीति प्रतीति भरोस ।
सो तुलसी सुमिरत सकल सगुन सुमंगल कोस ।।

33. rāma nāma para nāma tēm prīti pratīti bharōsa.
sō tulasī sumirata sakala saguna sumaṅgala kōsa..

Tulsidas says those who are wholly devoted to Lord Ram's holy Name, have great affection for it, a firm belief in it, and have no other support in this world except the strength of Lord's holy Name such persons become a treasury of all good virtues and auspiciousness as soon as they remember the holy Name of the Lord. (33)

[Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 10 that says “the Lord's holy Name is the one which provides all goodness, auspiciousness and good fortunes, and eliminates the bad, the misfortunes and the unholiness. It is therefore repeated by Lord Shiva and goddess Uma, this divine consort”.

For instance, when one takes a bath in a holy river, he gets drenched and all his dirt gets washed-off. Similarly, when one remains submerged in the thoughts of the Lord and symbolically scrub his innerself by repeating the holy Name of the Lord, all his worldly taints as well as the impurities that sully his innerself are washed-off.

This notion is cited in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 34 which says—“groups of pious men take a bath in the holy water of river Sarayu, repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram and establishing the Lord's divine image in their innerself”.]

34. लंक बिभीषन राज कपि पति मारुति खग मीच ।
लही राम सों नाम रति चाहत तुलसी नीच ।।

34. laṅka bibhīṣana rāja kapi pati māruti khaga mīca.
lahī rāma sōm nāma rati cāhata tulasī nīca..

Vibhishan¹ obtained the crown of Lanka, Sugriv² got the kingdom (of Kishkindha), Hanuman³ received fame as a loyal devotee and the best follower of the Lord, and the vulture Jatayu⁴ achieved death which is unattainable even by the Gods.

Tulsidas says that he is not as fortunate as them. But that does not bother him. He only wants to have the highest level of love, devotion and affection in the holy and divine Name of the Lord (because he knows that the spiritual rewards that come with it are greater than anything else in this world; because he knows that the Name of the Lord will deliver to him all the benefits that those named in this verse got by the personal intervention of Lord Ram or their personal meeting with the Lord).

[This Doha emphasizes the great importance of the holy Name of Lord Ram. Tulsidas stresses the point that the holy Name of Lord Ram is more powerful and spiritually beneficial than the physical form of the Lord himself. In this context, refer Doha no. 31.] (34)

[¹Vibhishan was the younger brother of Ravana. He had taken refuge with Lord Ram after being kicked by his brother and insulted in open court. When he took shelter with Lord Ram, the Lord immediately anointed him the future king of Lanka, thereby sealing the fate of Ravana, his elder brother. So when the war was finally won, the Lord appointed Vibhishan on the throne of Lanka.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 49; Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 106.

Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 49 says “the wealth, the prosperity, fame and majesty that Ravana had acquired by doing severe penances and austerities along with offering of his ten heads to Lord Shiva as a sacrifice, were given to Vibhishan by Lord Ram even without any effort on the former’s part and even without his seeking or expecting them”. This Doha essentially says that by submitting to Lord Ram and becoming his devotee, a person can get all that he wants, as well as a lot more, as a bonus, that he never expects to get even in his dream.

Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 106 narrates that Lord Ram anointed Vibhishan as the king of Lanka after victory in the epic war to keep the promise the Lord had made to him at the time of Vibhishan’s seeking refuge in the holy feet of the Lord.

²Sugriv was the monkey king whose army helped Lord Ram locate Sita, and then launch a campaign against the demons that ultimately led to the war of Lanka. Sugriv was beaten out of the kingdom of Kishkindha by his elder brother Vaali. When he sought Lord Ram’s help, the Lord killed Vaali and put Sugriv on the throne of Kishkindha which was capital of the kingdom of the monkey race. Ref: Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Doha no. 11.

³Hanuman was a companion of Sugriv and the closest confidante and the greatest devotee of Lord Ram. His meeting with the Lord, and the Lord expressing his unconditional indebtedness towards Hanuman have been chronicled in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Sundar Kand and Lanka Kand.

Some of the brief references are as follows—(i) Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precede Doha no. 1, to line no. 1 that precede Doha no. 4 that describe Lord Ram’s first meeting with Hanuman; (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-8 that precede Doha no. 32 in which Lord Ram expresses his indebtedness to Hanuman; (iii) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 33 wherein the Lord has

affectionately embraced Hanuman; and (iv) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precede Doha no. 50 which says that no one is as fortunate and lucky as Hanuman whose devotion and love for the holy feet of Lord Ram is legendary and unmatched.

Refer also to Vinai Patrika, verse no. 100.

Hanuman was the one who had searched Sita successfully, and had played a pivotal role in the Lord's victory in Lanka. He is regarded as a manifestation of Rudra who is one of the many forms of Lord Shiva, the third of the Trinity Gods responsible for conclusion of creation.

⁴Jatau—refer to Doha no. 32 herein above.

He was the vulture who had fought with Ravana in a futile attempt to prevent him from taking Sita away to Lanka. Lord Ram had given him love befitting a father, and the Lord had done his last rites himself. Lord Ram was an incarnation of the Supreme Being, and this is why his caressing a wounded vulture with his own hands, putting the bird's head on his lap and wiping blood from his injured body with his long hairs, grieving at his death just as a son would do when his father dies, and performing his last rites just as he would do for his own father is regarded as something that even the gods and the greatest of sages and hermits were denied. Dying in the physical presence of the Lord God is in itself next to impossible, but to have the Lord move his merciful and kind hands on one's dying body and having the Lord perform one's funeral is the best death that any living being can hope to have. Jatau got this privilege. That is why he is regarded as luckier than even the Gods.

Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 30 to Doha no. 33; and (ii) Dohawali, verse nos. 222-227.]

35. हरन अमंगल अघ अखिल करन सकल कल्याण ।
रामनाम नित कहत हर गावत बेद पुरान ॥

35. harana amaṅgala agha akhila karana sakala kalyāṇa.
rāmanāma nita kahata hara gāvata bēda purāṇa..

Lord Ram's holy Name eliminates all misfortunes and sins, and is exceptionally beneficial as well as a provider of welfare and good fortunes in every possible way. This is why Lord Shiva constantly keeps on repeating Ram's holy Name, and it is also highly praised and lauded in unequivocal terms even by the Vedas and the Purans (i.e. by the ancient scriptures). (35)

[Refer: (i) Barvai Ramayan, verse no. 56, 58. (ii) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 184. (iii) Dohawali, verse no. 33.]

36. तुलसी प्रीति प्रतीति सों राम नाम जप जाग ।
किएँ होइ बिधि दाहिनो देइ अभागेहि भाग ॥

36. tulasī prīti pratīti sōm rāma nāma japa jāga.
ki'ēṁ hō'i bidhi dāhinō dē'i abhāgēhi bhāga..

Tulsidas says that by performing a Yagya (a religious ritual usually associated with some fire sacrifice) in the form of repeating Ram's holy Name in the proper way and with the greatest of devotion, love, faith and dedication¹, even Vidhata (the creator) becomes benign and favourable, thereby making the most unfortunate man into a lucky person. (36)

[¹Refer to: (i) Dohawali, verse nos. 5 and 23; and (ii) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 70 and 130.]

37. जल थल नभ गति अमित अति अग जग जीव अनेक ।
तुलसी तो से दीन कहँ राम नाम गति एक ॥

37. jala thala nabha gati amita ati aga jaga jīva anēka.
tulasī tō sē dīna kaham̐ rāma nāma gati ēka..

There are millions of (i.e. countless) creatures—both animate as well as inanimate in this world. Some have their abode underground, some on land, and some in the air. Tulsidas says that for him, Lord Ram's holy Name is the only destination and the only habitat. (37)

[A creature finds a destination or is born in the new life into a world according to deeds by him in his previous life. Therefore, some are born as birds who are sky borne, some as animals and humans who live on the surface of the earth, and others who live underground in holes, such as snakes, and under water such as the marine creatures and those who live in water of lakes and ponds. But Tulsidas says that he is not bothered, for the only destination for him is Lord Ram; wherever he is born he will be living in the bliss of his Lord, so it does not matter.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 3 which cites all the the world having three types of creatures, the ones who live in the sky, the ones who live on the surface of the earth, and the ones who live in water. Then, all living beings are further classified as those who are mobile (such as animals) and those who are immobile (such as plants).

Another interpretation is that Tulsidas is certain of his destiny—he will surely find emancipation and salvation by attaining the Supreme Being known as Ram because he has been chanting the Lord's divine Name throughout his life.

Besides this, Tulsidas has no other source of solace and succour except the holy Name of Lord Ram. It is here that his soul finds peace, happiness, rest and bliss. So Tulsidas says that his heart and mind as well as his Atma, his soul, always find their habitat—i.e. their comfortable resting place—in the holy Name of Lord Ram.

Refer: Vinai Patrika, verse no. 67, 68, 182, 252 etc.]

38. राम भरोसो राम बल राम नाम बिस्वास ।
सुमिरत सुभ मंगल कुसल माँगत तुलसीदास ॥

38. rāma bharōsō rāma bala rāma nāma bisvāsa.
sumirata subha maṅgala kusala māṁgata tulasīdāsa..

Tulsidas asks for only one boon or blessing or reward—that he should have reliance only on Lord Ram's Name, that Lord Ram should be his only strength, and that he should believe only in Lord Ram's holy Name the mere remembrance of which provides all the auspiciousness, well-beings and good fortunes that one can ever have or expect to have. (38)

[Refer also to: (i) Barvai Ramayan, verse no. 68; (ii) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 69, 77, 81, 84, 109; (iii) Vairagya Sandipani, verse no. 15; (iv) Dohawali, verse nos. 34-35, 39, 277.]

39. राम नाम रति राम गति राम नाम बिस्वास ।
सुमिरत सुभ मंगल कुसल दुहुँ दिसि तुलसीदास ॥

39. rāma nāma rati rāma gati rāma nāma bisvāsa.
sumirata subha maṅgala kusala duhum̐ disi tulasīdāsa..

Tulsidas says that those who love Lord Ram's holy Name, have Lord Ram as their only destination, and believe in none other than the Lord's holy Name—for such people the mere remembrance of Lord Ram's holy Name gives auspiciousness, well-being and good fortunes in both the worlds (this mundane world as well as the world to which they go after death). (39)

[Refer also to: (i) Dohawali, verse nos. 23, 33, 34, 36, 38 and 58 etc.; (ii) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 36; and (iii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28 which says “the Lord's name, i.e. ‘Ram’, is a provider of all round auspiciousness and goodness, in any way whatsoever it is remembered and repeated, whether done so attentively and carefully with due diligence, or lazily, or negligently and carelessly, whether it is remembered and repeated with honour, respect and reverence, or with hate and annoyance”.

The best way to understand how this happens is to take an example—when an ill man takes a correct medicine, it will cure him of his illness notwithstanding whether he had taken it willingly, with full knowledge of its medical benefits or its formula, or he had been forced to take it by the doctor.]

40. रसना साँपिनि बदन बिल जे न जपहिं हरिनाम ।
तुलसी प्रेम न राम सों ताहि बिधाता बाम ॥

40. rasanā sāṃṇini badana bila jē na japahim̐ harināma.
tulasī prēma na rāma sōm̐ tāhi bidhātā bāma..

Tulsidas says the tongue of those who do not chant Sri Hari's (Ram's) Name is like a serpent which only pours venom in the form of worldly talks, and their mouth is like the serpent's pit (a dark hole where the tongue lives like that of a serpent). Those who have no love for Lord Ram, the creator appears to be opposed to them (i.e. they are most unlucky, for then they can never ever hope to get any peace, happiness and bliss anywhere in this world). (40)

[Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 204 which says that those who do not find interest in the holy deeds of the Lord, i.e. the divine story of the Lord during his incarnation as Ram, are abandoned even by the creator. That is, they are most unfortunate and deprived of the chance to find happiness and welfare. They cannot expect any good and well-being even in their dreams.]

41. हिय फाटहुँ फूटहुँ नयन जरउ सो तन केहि काम ।
द्रवहिं स्रवहिं पुलकइ नहीं तुलसी सुमिरत राम ॥

41. hiya phāṭahum̐ phūṭahum̐ nayana jara'u sō tana kēhi kāma.
dravahim̐ sravahim̐ pulaka'i nahim̐ tulasī sumirata rāma..

Tulsidas says those hearts that do not melt (become mellowed) on remembering Lord Ram should burst (crack, die, disintegrate), those eyes that do not shed tears of love and affection should be blinded, and that body which does not become thrilled and ecstatic should be burnt and reduced to ashes—for what is the use of keeping such a despicable body and its various parts because all such organs are worthless, and it is better to get rid of them. (41)

[Refer: (i) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 83, 268; (ii) Dohawali, verse nos. 42-45.

In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 113 we read that “the heart that does not feel exhilarated and ecstatic upon hearing the glories and the divine story of Lord Ram is surely like a hardened, lifeless and emotionless Vajra, the strongest and the hardest element in existence”.

Further, Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 41 says “those who feel extremely exhilarated, happy, joyous, ecstatic and thrilled by narrating and hearing the divine story of the Lord, and who take a symbolic bath in the holy river constituting of the glories and the holy deeds of the Lord—they are the ones who are deemed to be holy and have done an auspicious deed which portends all round good for their soul and their well-being”.]

42. रामहि सुमिरत रन भिरत देत परत गुरु पायँ ।
तुलसी जिन्हहि न पुलक तनु ते जग जीवत जायँ ॥

42. rāmahi sumirata rana bhirata dēta parata guru pāyam̐ .
tulasī jinhahi na pulaka tanu tē jaga jīvata jāyam̐ ..

At the time of remembering Lord Ram¹, facing enemy during ethically fought combat², giving alms and donation³, and at the time of bowing at the feet of the Guru (enlightened moral teacher)⁴ – those who are not thrilled on such occasions live a worthless life. (42)

[¹Refer: Vinai Patrika, verse no. 83.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 284; Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 229.

Now, let us briefly see what the above lines of Ram Charit Manas say. (i) Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 284 says “a Kshatriya who gets scared when facing an enemy is like a blight on the face of the family in which he is born”. (ii) Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 229 says “arrogance and haughtiness arising out of royal powers and strength is a natural blight that did not spare even great kings such as the thousand-armed Sastra-baahu, Indra, the king of gods, and king Trishanku”.

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line no. 1 of Doha no. 207 which says “Oh King, you must give with cheerfulness, and discard delusions of being deprived of something that is so dear to you that you can’t part with it”. This is said by sage Vishwamitra when King Dasrath was reluctant to send Ram and Laxman with the sage to protect his fire sacrifice. The idea is, one must give with cheerfulness and willingly, and never cling to anything in this world.

⁴Refer: (i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Sortha line nos. 1-10, and Chaupai line nos. 1 and 5 that precedes Doha no. 1, which primarily are dedicated to the praise of the holy feet of one’s Guru. (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, line nos. 2-3 of Doha no. 5 describes how Lord Ram had rushed to fall at the feet of his Guru sage Vashistha and sage Vaamdeo as soon as the Lord saw them upon his return to Ayodhya after the end of the 14 years of forest exile. This is cited here to emphasise that even the Lord had eagerly fell at the feet of his learned Guru and other elderly men to show his respect to them.]

43. हृदय सो कुलिस समान जो न द्रवइ हरिगुन सुनत ।
कर न राम गुन गान जीह सो दादुर जीह सम ॥

43. hr̥daya sō kulisa samāna jō na drava'i hariguna sunata.
kara na rāma guna gāna jīha sō dādura jīha sama..

The heart, which does not become mellowed and full of devotion on hearing Sri Hari's (Sri Ram's) glories, is hard (i.e. stiff, unemotional and soul-less) like a Vajra (the thunderbolt; literally 'hard as a stone'); and a tongue, which does not sing the glories of Lord Ram, is croaking like that of a frog's. (43)

[¹Refer: (i) Dohawali, verse no. 41.

(ii) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 5-7 that precede Doha no. 113 which say—“He who has not given place to devotion and love for the Lord in his heart is as good as a corpse. The tongue that does not sing or narrate the divine glories and virtues of the Lord is like the tongue of a frog. The heart that does not feel ecstatic on hearing the divine story of the Lord is as stern and lifeless as Vajra, the hardest element in existence.”

(iii) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1 and 6 that precede Doha no. 53 which say “those who get fed up by hearing the story of Lord Ram have not understood its true meaning, and neither have they truly enjoyed its succulent juice which is like nectar; such creatures who get fed up by hearing the Lord’s divine

glories and holy stories are self-defeating, self-ruining, and act like poison for their own self”.

(iv) Refer also to: Vinai Patrika, verse no. 142, and no. 237.

In brief, any one organ (or all the organs) of the creature’s body that do not (or does not) find comfort, peace, happiness and joy in Lord Ram’s holy Name, which is like the nectar of life, is (or are) absolutely worthless, and worthy of discarding.

Refer also to Srimad Bhagvad Mahapurāṇa, 2/3/20-24.]

51. रे मन सब सों निरस ह्वै सरस राम सों होहि ।
भलो सिखावन देत है निसि दिन तुलसी तोहि ॥

51. rē mana saba sō nīrasa hvai sarasa rāma sōm hōhi.
bhalō sikhāvana dēta hai nisi dina tulasī tōhi..

[Addressing the mind, Tulsidas motivates it to avoid thinking about the mortal world to which it has a natural inclination to move and get hooked, and instead focus its attention on Lord Ram because it will give the mind immense peace, bliss and happiness.]

‘Oh Mind! Tulsidas advises you day and night to detach yourself from all the products and material sense objects of this (deluding and entrapping) world, and instead attach yourself to Lord Ram (i.e. have devotion, affection, faith and longing for Sri Ram, and surrender yourself to the Lord).’ (51)

[The world is selfish, and whatever benefits one seems to get by his attachment with the world is because he is of some use to the latter and serves some of its interests. As soon as he stops serving the vested interest of the world, the latter would start shunning him like he was some despicable creature. But Lord Ram is very kind, merciful and accepting; he is a friend of the downtrodden and the helpless; he will accept the person even when he is useless for the society. The only requirement the Lord needs is devotion, love and sincerity of surrender. He does not like deceit and cunning.

Refer also to: (i) Dohawali, verse nos. 21 and 49; and (ii) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 190.]

57. राम प्रेम बिनु दूबरो राम प्रेमहीं पीन ।
रघुबर कबहुँक करहुगे तुलसिहि ज्यों जल मीन ॥

57. rāma prēma binu dūbarō rāma prēmahīm pīna.
raghubara kabahumka karahugē tulasihī jyōm jala mīna..

A fish¹ gets nourishment in water and remains healthy in it, but it becomes emaciated without it and dies if totally deprived of it. Similarly, Tulsidas wonders when shall he develop such profound degree of devotion, longing, love and affection for Raghubar

(Sri Ram) that he would become emaciated without the Lord, and feel nourished (well-off, happy and contented) by having love and affection for the Lord. (57)

[¹Refer also to Doha no. 56, 404 and 569 of the book ‘Dohawali’.

In Vinai Patrika, verse no. 68, stanza no. 5, the metaphor of the fish is used to emphasise the sort of love, devotion and dedication one should have for Lord Ram. This stanza says—“Oh Tulsidas! Just like a fish depends upon water, you (Tulsidas addresses himself) have only one succour and hope in the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram in all the three phases of life representing your past (previous life), your present (life in this world), and your future (life after death).”]

58. राम सनेही राम गति राम चरन रति जाहि ।
तुलसी फल जग जनम को दियो बिधाता ताहि ॥

58. rāma sanēhī rāma gati rāma carana rati jāhi.
tulasī phala jaga janama kō diyō bidhātā tāhi..

Tulsidas says that a person who loves only Lord Ram, whose aim or goal in life is (the attainment of) Lord Ram, and who has devotion and affection only for the feet of Lord Ram—well, such a person is the fortunate one who has been selected by the creator for granting the real benefits or rewards of having taken birth in this world.

[That is, such a person is indeed most lucky and he enjoys the fruit of life by way of happiness, joys, bliss, contentedness, pleasures and comforts of all kinds, as well as good fame and a secured spiritual future in the form of liberation and deliverance of the soul.] (58)

[Refer also to: (i) Dohawali, verse no. 39; (ii) Kavitaawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 37; and (iii) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 195, line no. 2—which says: “the creator seems to opposed to someone who does not have devotion and love for the holy feet of Lord Ram and serve them in this world”.]

61. जे जन रूखे बिषय रस चिकने राम सनेहँ ।
तुलसी ते प्रिय राम को कानन बसहिं कि गेहँ ॥

61. jē jana rūkhē biṣaya rasa cikanē rāma sanēham̐ .
tulasī tē priya rāma kō kānana basahim̐ ki gēham̐ ..

Tulsidas says that only those who have renounced their attachment to the material gross world of sense objects and a desire or longing for them, and are instead engrossed in enjoying the taste of the nectar of love and devotion for Lord Ram are the ones who are the beloved of the Lord. It does not matter then whether they stay in the forest (as hermits or ascetics) or live as a householder. (61)

[Usually it is believed that a hermit or sage who has renounced the world and its material attractions is closer to God as compared to a householder who remains

engaged in the affairs of the world. Tulsidas addresses this question and says that what actually matters is not whether one stays in the forest or lives a householder's life carrying out his assigned duties but the degree and depth of his love and devotion for the Lord God. Merely living in a forest will not serve any spiritual purpose if the man's mind is hooked to the world. A householder who does his duties but keeps his mind, sub-conscious and heart focused on the Lord God is far better than a hermit or sage who dons ochre clothes but remains hooked to the world and its material charms. A person can deceive the world by his pretensions, but not the Lord. So those who have sincere and truthful love and devotion for Lord Ram are given the greatest of respect and honour in the community of saints and sages irrespective of their vocation.

Refer also to: (i) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 118, 127, 251; (ii) Dohawali, verse nos. 62-63 that follow below; (iii) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 204; Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 277; Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-10 that precedes Doha no. 86; Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 87 and line no. 2 of Doha 87 Ka.

Let us briefly see what Ram Charit Manas says on the referred topic.

(a) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Doha no. 204—see note of Doha no. 60 above.

(b) Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 277—“those whose mind and heart are drenched in, soaked in, infused and suffused with a natural love and affection for Lord Ram, such persons get honoured and respected in the community of saints”.

(c) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-10 that precedes Doha no. 86 in which the Lord himself declares to sage Kaagbhusund—“I repeatedly tell you, truthfully, that there is nothing or no one in this world as dear to me as the person who serves me with devotion, faith and sincerity. Even Brahma, the creator, is like other ordinary beings for me if he lacks devotion and faith in me. On the contrary, if a creature has devotion and faith in me then I love like my life even though he may be most lowly and downtrodden.”

(d) Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 87 and line no. 2 of Doha 87 (a)—“amongst all the creatures, they who have devotion, love, affection, belief and faith in me after having abandoned all sorts of negativity such as deceit, pretensions and delusions, verily I say that they are very dear to me no matter who they are, even if they are impotent men or women, or even if they are humble creatures of whatever denomination”.]

62. जथा लाभ संतोष सुख रघुबर चरन सनेह ।
तुलसी जो मन खूँद सम कानन बसहुँ कि गेह ॥

62. jathā lābha santōṣa sukha raghubara carana sanēha.
tulasī jō mana khūṁṁda sama kānana basahūṁ ki gēha..

One who is contented and happy with whatever he gets, and in whom (i.e. in whose heart) love and devotion for Lord Ram's holy feet is full to the brim, he whose heart and mind have become like a horse whose hind legs are tied¹—Tulsidas says that for such people, there is no difference between living in a forest or as a householder. (62)

[¹When the hind legs of a horse are tied it cannot go anywhere inspite of moving its front legs constantly. Similarly, when one has tied oneself at the holy feet of Sri Ram, then his mind and heart won't wonder from place to place.

Refer also to verse nos. 61 and 63 herein above.]

63. तुलसी जौं पै राम सों नाहिन सहज सनेह ।
मूँड मुड़ायो बादिहीं भाँड़ भयो तजि गेह ॥

63. tulasī jaur̥ṁ pai rāma sōṁ nāhina sahaja sanēha.
mūṁḍa muṛāyō bādihīṁ bhāmṛa bhayō taji gēha..

Tulsidas says that if one does not have natural love, affection and devotion for Sri Ram, then it is useless to tonsure the head (i.e. leave the household and pretend to be a monk or an ascetic). (63)

[Refer also to Vinai Patrika, verse no. 204, 268.

Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 137 says that it is useless for a person to have dressed like a hermit who has renounced the world, but harbour desires or yearnings for this world in his mind and heart. It is plain and simple cheating.]

80. निगम अगम साहेब सुगम राम साँचिली चाह ।
अंबु असन अवलोकिअत सुलभ सबै जग माँह ॥

80. nigama agama sāhēba sugama rāma sām̐cīlī cāha.
ambu asana avalōki'ata sulabha sabai jaga mām̐ha..

Lord Ram (the personified form of Brahm, the Supreme Being), who is beyond comprehension even by the Vedas, is easily accessible or attainable by everyone (i.e. the devotee, the spiritual seeker) by having purity of devotion and sincerity of desire to reach the Lord just like water and food are very easily available to all in this world. (80)

[Water and food are abundantly available in this world, but they have to sought by the needy—they won't come automatically to the thirsty and the hungry till the latter make basic effort to get them though they are available aplenty in this world. So is the case with the Lord—he is easily accessible and ready to walk the extra mile or take the extra step only if the devotee or the seeker makes some basic effort. And the simplest effort that he is expected to make is having devotion and love for Lord Ram.

Refer Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, line no. 1 of Doha no. 117 (a) which says that Lord Ram is not attained even during deep meditation done by great sages and ascetics, and is also incomprehensible to the Vedas because they cannot definitely define him but simply say 'Neti-Neti'—i.e. not this, not this. In other words, after having spent reams of paper in an attempt to sing hymns to the Supreme Being and using countless epithets and adjectives and nouns and proper nouns to describe who the Lord is and what are his characteristic virtues and qualities, they ultimately

surrender and say that nothing can be said with absolutely certainty about the Lord. It cannot be said that 'this' is Lord and 'that' is not Lord. He is omnipresent, all-pervading and immanent in creation.

Lord Shiva has affirmed that the only way to make the Lord reveal himself is un-adulterated love and affection—refer Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, line nos. 5-7 that precedes Doha no. 185.

Refer also to (i) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse no. 55; (ii) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 126; (iii) Dohawali, verse no. 573.]

81. सन्मुख आवत पथिक ज्यों दिँदौ दाहिनो बाम ।
तैसोइ होत सु आप को त्यों ही तुलसी राम ॥

81. sanmukha āvata pathika jyōm di'ēm' dāhinō bāma.
taisō'i hōta su āpa kō tyōm hī tulasī rāma..

Tulsidas says that a pedestrian coming to you from the opposite direction would pass by your left or right depending on the right-of-way of passage you give to him. Similarly, Lord Ram would respond to you depending on the quality and intensity of your devotion and faith, as well as the degree of earnestness and sincerity that you have. (81)

[Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 219 says that though it is true that the Lord has ordained that the world would be driven by the principles of action and reaction, or the principle of Karma which says that a man reaps what he sows, but still the Lord treats each individual according to the level of devotion, humility and submission he has for the Lord. That is, the Lord would forgive and consider sympathetically the case of those who are devoted to him, ask for forgiveness, offer all their deeds and their fruits to the Lord, and submit before him unconditionally, as compared to those who are sinful and opposed to the Supreme Being. In other words, everything depends upon the individual and his own spiritual inclinations.

Bharat also says the same thing in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 182. He essentially says in these lines that though it is correct that he (Bharat) is the root cause of all the mischief that has occurred in Ayodhya (which led to Lord Ram's forest exile and the death of his father Dasrath), it is certain that when the Lord (Ram) sees him (Bharat) in front, seeking forgiveness and refuge in his (Lord's) holy feet, he (the Lord) would surely forgive him (Bharat) and lovingly accept him, because the Lord is an ocean of mercy and compassion.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 2-3 that precede Doha no. 299 which say that even the most horrible of sinners and culprits are forgiven by the Lord when they come and submit themselves with humility and devotion before the Lord.]

128. जो चेतन कहँ जड़ करइ जड़हि करइ चैतन्य ।
अस समर्थ रघुनायकहि भजहिं जीव ते धन्य ॥

128. jō cētana kaham̐ jāra kara'i jārahi kara'i caitan'ya.
asa samartha raghunāyakahi bhajahim̐ jīva tē dhan'ya..

Those who worship Lord Ram—who has the mystical and divine power to make something that is animate into something inanimate and vice-versa—are fortunate, privileged and blessed. They are the wise and lucky ones (who have understood the secret of finding liberation and deliverance from this world as well as the truth of the Supreme Being living amongst them in the subtle form of Lord Ram as his divine story, his divine name and his divine glory). (128)

[This Doha appears in the epic Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, as its Doha no. 119.

We have two living instances how the Lord can make even the most enlightened and realised saint into one who is equivalent to an ignorant one, and one who has no knowledge of the scriptures into one who becomes so exalted that the Lord himself appeared before him. The first instance is that of sage Narad who prouderd himself as being the greatest devotee of Lord Vishnu. He was once so deluded that he wished to marry a girl, and when he found out that Lord Vishnu had prevented him from doing so (because the Lord did not wish Narad to get entangled in passions and lust as he was a Sanyasi, an ascetic who is supposed to remain aloof from attachments and lust of the sensual pleasures) he cursed the Lord. It was one of the reasons why Lord Vishnu became a human, and the Lord had to suffer the agony of separation from his divine consort Laxmi, who became Sita when the Lord himself became Ram. This entire episode is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 125 to 139.

There are many instances of the second category of devotees—viz. Jatau, the vulture (Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Doha no. 28 to 32), Sabari, the low caste woman (Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34 to Doha no. 36), Vibhishan, the demon brother of Ravana (Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Doha no. 41 to 49).

Then there is the story of the child devotee Prahalad who had been able to have a Darshan (divine, sacred sight) of Lord Vishnu though he was merely a child.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 122 (b). It says—“the Lord can make a mosquito as great, majestic and powerful as Brahma, the creator of the visible world, and reduce Brahma to an inconsequential state of a mosquito. Therefore, a wise man must abandon logic and debates about Lord Ram, as the Lord cannot be understood by application of worldly logic and intelligence, and instead focus his attention on having devotion and faith in the Lord and his supremacy.”

Then again, in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 35 asserts that Lord Ram can convert a humble straw or reed into a Vajra (the hardest thing in existence; the strong weapon of Indra), and vice versa.

Refer also to Dohawali, verse no. 129 in this context.

Regarding those who are fortunate to have devotion and faith in Lord Ram, Tulsidas says in his epic Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 127 that Lord Shiva told his divine consort Uma that a clan or family in which are born people who have devotion, love and faith in Lord Ram is indeed praise worthy, noble, holy, pious, honourable and most exalted in this world.

Vairagya Sandipani, verse no. 36 says that ‘glory to the father and mother who have a son who worships Lord Ram in any manner whatsoever, willingly or unwillingly, rightly or wrongly, with or without devotion.’ That is, just like a correct

medicine curing a disease even if it is taken unwillingly, Lord Ram will take care of anyone who worships the Lord irrespective of his having devotion for the Lord or not.]

129. श्रीरघुबीर प्रताप ते सिंधु तरे पाषाण ।
ते मतिमंद जे राम तजि भजहिं जाइ प्रभु आन ॥

129. śrīraghubīra pratāpa tē sindhu tarē pāṣāṇa.
tē matimanda jē rāma taji bhajahim̐ jā'i prabhu āna..

By the glory and effect of Raghubir, the brave king of Raghu's dynasty (i.e. Lord Ram), even stones and boulders floated on the water of the ocean (during construction of the bridge to cross over to Lanka). Therefore, surely one is un-wise and an idiot if he abandons such a Lord and worship others.

[If dead rocks can float on the water of the ocean by the grace of Lord Ram, then getting across the ocean represented by this mundane world, and getting liberation and deliverance for the soul from its fetters, is also possible if one relies faithfully and exclusively on the powers of the divine name of the Lord, and has devotion for him.]
(129)

[This Doha also appears in the epic Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, as its Doha no. 3.

The great monkey architects Nal and Neel were building the bridge. Huge boulders and rocks as huge as mountains were dumped in the ocean, and they remain afloat and steady at one place. The world gave the credit of the construction of the bridge to the monkeys and their architect, but has anyone thought the real reason why the rocks and boulders floated instead of sinking to the bottom of the ocean? Well, Tulsidas says that it is due to the powers of Lord Ram's divine and holy name that this miracle happened, because Hanuman was busy etching the Lord's name on each individual stone before it was thrown into the ocean. In other words, the secret of them floating and remaining tied was in the mystical name of Lord Ram that it acted as a buoy that prevented the gross and heavy-as-lead pieces of rock from sinking into the water.

Therefore, if a man invokes the holy and all-powerful name of Lord Ram, then he is sure to remain afloat in this quagmire-like world, and ultimately help his soul to get across it. He will never drown in the water of miseries and grief of this world.

In Vinai Patrika, verse no. 228 has a stanza that says that it can be made possible for lotus to grow on a stone if someone invokes the almighty powers of the divine name of Lord Ram and wishes it to be so.]

130. लव निमेष परमानु जुग बरस कलप सर चंड ।
भजसि न मन तेहि राम कहँ कालु जासु कोदंड ॥

130. lava nimēṣa paramānu juga barasa kalapa sara caṇḍa.
bhajasi na mana tēhi rāma kaham̐ kālu jāsu kōḍaṇḍa..

‘Oh mind! Why don't you worship Lord Ram (the Viraat Purush, the cosmic Lord) whose bow resembles Kaal (the time factor and death or end of creation), and the arrows are like the various divisions (fractions) of time such as a Lava, a Nimesh, a Parmaanu, a Yug (era or epoch), a Baras (year), and a Kalpa.’ (130)

[Technically, the smallest fraction of time is the ‘Parmaanu’, i.e. the time taken by light to pass through an atom, or the time taken by a photon to travel through an atom, or for an atom to oscillate. The ‘Nimesh’ is the time taken for the eyelid to close and open once. The ‘Lav’ is equivalent to 36 such Nimesh. The ‘Jug’ is an era or an epoch; it may consist of a hundred years or thousands of years. According to Hindu belief, one cycle of creation and destruction of the whole world consists of 4 Yugs—viz. the Sata Yug, the Treta Yug when Lord Ram was born, the Dwapar Yug when Lord Krishna came down to earth, and the Kali Yug which is the current era of the four Yug cycle. The ‘Kalpa’ is equivalent to 1 day in the life of Brahma, the creator; it is equal to 1000 four-Yug cycles.

The word ‘Kaal’ has many connotations—it refers to death, an end, conclusion of what exists, a frame of time, a notion of time that is relative, creating the sense of present, the past and the future.

In practice, Tulsidas means that whatever or whoever that is born or created in this world is bound to die or come to an end. No thing and no one is eternal and imperishable. Some exist for a fraction of time, some longer for many years, and some others for thousands of years. Even Brahma the creator has his life-span fixed and measured.

There is an Upanishad known as Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atarva Veda tradition in which the life-span of Brahma is clearly defined in its Canto 3, paragraph nos. 8-9.

To quote—“One day-time of Brahma the creator consists of one thousand cycles of creation and destruction, with each cycle consisting of the 4-Yug period according to the Hindu tradition.

One night of Brahm has the same duration as his daytime.

Therefore, the complete ‘day’ of Brahma as we humans understand this term to mean (i.e. one full cycle of day-time + night-time) would be equal to the total time taken for one day-time and one night-time according to Brahma’s measurement.

During this one day of Brahma, the world known as the Satya Loka (the truthful heaven where Brahma and the other senior Gods such as Vishnu live) is created and destroyed once. [That is, one cycle of creation and destruction of heaven would be equal to one thousand such cycles on earth where mortal creatures live.]

With this cosmic scale of measuring time, fifteen such days of Brahma would be his one ‘Paksha’ or fortnight.

Two such fortnights would be Brahma’s one month.

Two such months would be Brahma’s one season.

Three such seasons would be one solstice in the year of Brahma.

Two such solstices (i.e. the summer and the winter solstices) would make up one year of Brahma.

According to this celestial measurement of time, Brahma’s one life consists of one hundred such years.

This is said to be one life-span of Brahma the creator (8).”

The ‘4-Yug’ cycle is the following—“The first is the Sata-yug, the second is the Treta-yug, the third is the Dwapar-yug, and the fourth is the current Kali-yug.

This Doha appears in the invocational lines of Lanka Kand in Ram Charit Manas. The context is the beginning of the war at Lanka, and hence it is emphasized here that the person who is about to launch the offensive against the evil demons who represent the negative and evil forces in creation so as to eliminate them and restore the balance in favour of positive forces and righteousness is none other than the Supreme Being who has come down upon this earth to do this job himself. The image that is invoked here is that of the Viraat Purush, the all-pervading, all-encompassing, all-powerful and supreme Authority and the almighty Lord of creation.

It is the universal law of Nature that whatever or whoever that is born or created must die or come to an end. It is to uphold this law that the Supreme Being is depicted as holding the Bow of Death and continuously shooting the Arrows marking different times. The metaphoric meaning is clear—death of all those who are born is an inviolable certainty, what varies is the time that they live. Some creatures have a short life-span, other live longer, but no one can say that he will live for eternity. The Death God was so scared of the demons and their king Ravana that he was afraid to approach them, so the Lord himself decided to come down and do the needful.

Another interpretation is as follows—the demon king Ravana had tried to take a boon from Brahma that he will never die. But the creator told him that it is impossible. So Ravana devised a mean to circumvent it and asked that he will be immune to death except at the hands of a man and monkey. He was so over-confident of himself, his strength and invincibility that he thought that when even the great Gods would not be able to kill him then he has nothing to fear from the humble and coward human race and their predecessors, the monkeys, who were even more coward than their evolved forms known as the humans. In his lopsided wisdom Ravana thought that he was being exceptionally cunning in as much as he had managed to deceive Brahma into giving his consent to this condition, and thereby ensuring his freedom from the fear of death. Because he thought that once he subdued the almighty Gods, he will keep the Death God under his command and hold him captive, thereby escaping death for eternity.

But he forgot that no one has the right to break the law of creation that has been established by the Supreme Being, and not by Brahma who simply carries out his duty to ‘create’, and has no right over other aspects of creation such as its sustenance and conclusion, which are the exclusive prerogative of Vishnu and Shiva respectively. Cunning as he was, Ravana did severe penances and pleased Shiva, thereby ensuring the latter’s kind view for him. But in his arrogance Ravana thought that once Brahma and Shiva are pleased with him, he has no fear from Vishnu, and he will easily overcome the Lord should the need arise. This single misplaced overconfidence did him in, as it was Lord Vishnu who manifested as a human being in the form of Lord Ram and killed Ravana.

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 88 it is asserted that those who are wise enough to worship and remember Lord Ram are freed from the effects of Kaal. The obvious meaning here is that such devout creatures find permanent liberation and deliverance from this mortal world dominated by death, and they become immortal in the sense that their soul, which in actuality is their truthful identity as opposed to their physical gross body, finds emancipation and salvation by becoming one with the Supreme Soul of creation known as the Parmatma. This Parmatma is none else but Lord Ram in his cosmic form as the Viraat Purush or Lord Vishnu, who in turn represents the Supreme Being known as Brahm.]

193. राम चरित राकेस कर सरिस सुखद सब काहु ।
सज्जन कुमुद चकोर चित हित बिसेषि बड़ लाहु ॥

194. rāma carita rākēsa kara sarisa sukhada saba kāhu.
sajjana kumuda cakōra cita hita bisēṣi baṛa lāhu..

The divine story and the glories of Lord Sri Ram give peace and joy to all equally in this world like the soothing and the comforting rays of the full moon, but they are especially attractive and highly beneficial for, and greatly loved by gentlemen who are pious and noble at heart (such as the Lord's devotees and those who are of a spiritual inclination). For the mind and intellect of such people, the Lord's divine story and his equally divine glories have the same effect as the rays of the full moon has on the lotus flower and the bird known as Chakor. (193)

[This Doha appears in the epic Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, as its Doha no. 32.

The full moon looks adorable and beautiful in the sky. Its rays act as a soothing balm on nerves and cool them down. As compared to the scorching rays of the sun, the rays of the moon are always welcome and invigorating for the heart. The moonlight illuminates the world softly and tenderly; it is free from the ferocity of the sunlight. All living beings find comfort and cheer under the rays of the moon, but the lotus flower and the Chakor bird (the Indian red-legged partridge) have special affection for the moon. The lotus flower opens its petals wide when the moon is at its radiant best, and the Chakor bird keeps its gaze fixed on its bright rounded disc as it moves across the sky. They derive extraordinary pleasure and comfort at the sight of the full moon.

Tulsidas cites this instance to emphasise that the divine story and the holy deeds of Lord Ram are charming and spiritually comforting for all the creatures in equal measure, but those who are the Lord's devotees, followers and spiritually oriented find extra pleasure and benefit from them. They feel exhilarated, joys and ecstatic when they hear the Lord's holy and divine name and stories being sung and narrated anywhere.

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 20 says "the divine story of Lord Ram is beneficial for the world and illuminates it (with spiritual wisdom, enlightenment and truthful knowledge about the Supreme Being whose revealed form is this whole world, and there is no entity that is separate and different from the Lord who resides in one's own inner self as the Atma, the Soul) like the sun and the moon".

Now let us examine why Tulsidas has chosen the example of the 'lotus' and the bird 'Chakor' in this verse. Lotus is a flower, not a living being par se. It has no mobility characteristic of the living being such as the bird Chakor. They represent two types of spiritual aspirants or seekers—one who remains involved in the affairs of the mundane external world but still manages to follow the spiritual path of doing auspicious deeds and worshipping the Lord in order to attain liberation and deliverance, and the other who renounces everything in the external world to turn inwards to seek the same spiritual goal by realizing that his Atma is none but the Parmatma, the cosmic Soul, the cosmic Consciousness, the supreme Brahm, who resides nowhere outside but in the individual's own inner self.

The 'Lotus' grows in the dirty water of a pond but still manages to remain clean. When it sees the face of the moon, its petals begin to open in a gesture showing the lotus' extreme happiness and joy. Hence it is like the former spiritual aspirant who remains involved in the gross affairs of mundane existence in this world but manages to keep his mind and sub-conscious aloof from them and focused on the Lord. Thus, though he appears to be going about his normal duties in this world in a normal way, yet his mind and heart are submerged in the thoughts of the Lord and enjoy remembering the Lord's divine name and deeds.

The bird Chakor, on the other hand, can fly; it is mobile like other living creatures as compared to the lotus which is bound to its surrounding environment of the dirty pond. If a particular place is not liked by the Chakor, it can immediately leave it and go to another more suitable perch, something the lotus can't do. Therefore, in this sense, the Chakor is more privileged than the lotus. The Chakor is like the wise and enlightened spiritual aspirant, such as self-realised ascetics, saints, sages, hermits and others who have renounced the world and tempting charms because they have realised that it is a trap that would keep them eternally turning in the wheel of birth and death and their attendant pain and suffering. So they break their relationships from the world and roam around like a mendicant. They are not bound to this world or the body like the bird Chakor that is not bound to any particular tree or garden, but is free to go anywhere that it likes.

Like the Chakor which fixes its gaze on the full moon, such self-realised and enlightened souls keep their mind and attention fixed on their spiritual goal which is to attain liberation and deliverance, salvation and emancipation for their 'self'. In this endeavour, they become contemplative and meditate upon the Atma residing in their inner self, besides studying the scriptures and analyzing their true meaning so as to search and find the truthful answer as to what these terms actually mean.

So we observe that both the types of spiritual aspirants or seekers have the same goal, though their approach and circumstances are different like the two instances of the lotus and the bird Chakor cited here. Both have the same degree of affection for the moon, but are poles apart in the hierarchy of creation—one is a plant that is studied under the field of science known as Botany, while the other is a living creature coming under the zoological kingdom and studied in Zoology.

In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 47 it is affirmed that "the divine story of Lord Ram is like the beautiful and charming rays of the full moon, while saints, holy and pious people are like the bird Chakor (that is so enamoured of the moon and its beauty that it keeps its gaze fixed on the latter)". In other words, such holy people keep their mind and attention fixed on the divine story and auspicious glories of Lord Sri Ram, who is a personified form of the Supreme Being.]

194. रघुबर कीरति सज्जननि सीतल खलनि सुताति ।
ज्यों चकोर चय चक्कवनि तुलसी चाँदनि राति ।।

194. raghubara kīrati sajjanani sītala khalani sutāti.
jyōm cakōra caya cakkavani tulasī cāṁḍani rāti..

The full moon night is a provider of comfort, solace, peace and joy to the bird called Chakor (as described in Doha no. 193), while it is tormenting for the bird called Chakava¹.

Similarly, Tulsidas says that the glories, the fame and the divine stories of Lord Sri Ram provide peace, tranquility, happiness and joy to good people (gentlemen; those who are pure and gentle at heart, those who are pious, holy, noble and spiritually inclined), but the holy name of the Lord and his divine stories (or any talk about him and even the mention of him) creates torments, annoyance, irritation and heart-burn among miscreants and evil people. (194)

[The 'Chakva' is the ruddy goose or an ostrich. The 'Chakor' is the Indian red-legged partridge. The same light of the full moon appears to torment the Chakva while it pleases the Chakor. The Chakor feels happy at the sight of the moon, while the Chakva shuns it.

These two birds are used as metaphors to describe how the divine stories of Lord Ram—and for that matter any thing related to spiritualism—is liked by saintly and noble people, but abhorred by non-saintly and wicked people. It also emphasizes how the same story is interpreted differently by these people.

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 16 says—“Lord Sri Ram manifested in this world like the full moon coming up in the eastern horizon to give happiness to saintly people and act like the frost or snow for the lotus flower symbolizing those who are wicked and evil.” The same lotus blooms when it sees the full moon in an ordinary night, but it shrivels and dies when the same moon rises in a night that is biting cold, when there is frost and it begins to snow.

In the present context it means that the same story of Lord Ram gives immense pleasure and spiritual comfort to those who are noble and saintly, while tormenting and annoying those who are evil and wicked.

Evil, sinful, pervert and wicked people have a natural tendency to see the wrong side of everything. They are compared to the bird Chakva which is angry when the full moon rises on the horizon because it torments this bird. While this moon is welcomed by the rest of the creatures, this is the only bird which abhors it, hates it, and treats the full moon with utter disdain and contempt.

Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 64 says “cool (good, pleasant) advice that should have been soothing and comforting (for Sita) appeared to torment her like the fire of hell just as the case of the Chakva which feels extremely unhappy and agitated during the night of the full moon of the Sharad Purnima (though this moon provides comfort, peace, solace and happiness to the rest of the world)”.

In Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 1, Lord Shiva tells his divine consort Uma that—“Lord Ram’s divine glories and eclectic qualities are extremely sublime, and are very mysterious and enigmatic—i.e. they are not easily understandable by all. While saints and wise people who hear them and do understand them develop spiritual wisdom and the virtue of renunciation, those who are of low and corrupt intellect, those who are opposed to the Lord and have no spiritual inclination or desire to follow the righteous path of Dharma (proper thought and noble intentions in life) prick holes in it and twist the story to suit their vested interests. They therefore get sucked in the endless vortex of delusions and confusions, while the saintly people find liberation and deliverance from the same story.”

For instance, saintly persons find in the story the nectar-like message of the importance of having devotion and submission for the Lord as an easy means of

attaining spiritual emancipation and salvation; they analyse the different aspects of the story and pick up gems of spiritual wisdom and countless advices for leading a life that is auspicious, righteous, noble and holy; they read the story and hear it being told as a tool for obtaining peace, solace, succour and comfort for their mind and heart.

The wicked people and those with pervert mind find countless faults in it and point out so many taints in the character of Lord Ram. They treat it as some fictional writing which is meant to entertain.]

473. बड़ि प्रतीति गठिबंध तें बड़ो जोग तें छेम ।
बड़ो सुसेवक साइँ तें बड़ो नेम तें प्रेम ॥

473. baḍi pratīti gaṭhibandha tēm̐ baṛō jōga tēm̐ chēma.
baṛō susēvaka sā'im̐ tēm̐ baṛō nēma tēm̐ prēma..

Faith, conviction, firmness of belief and trust (in any relationship) are more important than formal ties, bonds, treaties or agreements. [Refer Doha no. 453 also.]

Similarly, 'Kshem' is of greater importance than 'Yog' (as described in Doha no. 472).

Between a Lord and his servant or attendant, it is the latter who is more important than the former¹. [The Lord is praised and acquires his stature because he is honoured and raised to the exalted position by his attendants and followers who serve him diligently and faithfully. The king for instance wins a war relying on his soldiers; it is the soldier who lays down his life to serve his lord, the king, and all the glories that the king possesses are due to his subjects. Even in an ordinary household, it is the junior members of the family who do odd jobs, attend to the daily household chores and run around errands, freeing senior members to attend to their business affairs. Otherwise, the lord of the house and other senior members would be spending the whole day just running around errands and worrying for such routine matters as buying vegetables and grocery for the kitchen, washing clothes and sweeping the house, dropping children to school, and so on instead of paying attention to more important business matters upon which depend the bread and butter needs of the entire family. The chief supervisor in any organization can't work efficiently and look over a large office or workplace if he is not helped by a retinue of subordinates and functionaries working obediently under him. The credit of course goes to the supervisor, but it ought to be the workers who must be honoured for well-oiled official machinery. If we take another example, it is the devotee who is instrumental in giving importance to a particular deity as compared to others. This logic can be extended to any number of situations, and we find that it is always the junior who help the senior perform his tasks efficiently and with each. Therefore, upon analysis one comes to the conclusion that whatever glory and honour the lord or the senior has is due to the subordinates working backdoor and behind the scene for him.]

Finally, the virtue of sincerity and truthfulness in love, affection, devotion and dedication are more important than merely pretensions of these virtues and doing a routine form of service. External appearances or pretensions of love and dedication are worthless if there is no element of sincerity and honesty in them². [For instance, to have love and devotion for Lord God is more important than merely doing rituals and observing sacraments in a mechanical manner. Similarly, a subordinate who goes the extra mile to serve his organization diligently and faithfully with the best of his ability

and is never concerned about his personal comfort when it comes to service matters is always praised and becomes close to his seniors as compared to those who are merely working in a routine manner for a salary and are more interested in looking at the clock to stop work when the time of work ends than to put in an extra hour to serve the organization which has provided them with their bread and butter. Any master or teacher or parent, for instance, will love his respective subordinate or servant or student or off-spring more who serves him with dedication and love, who is ever eager to carry out any orders given to him by his master, teacher or parent as the case may be, as compared to others who just observe formalities and are more interested in their own selves than their benefactors.] (473)

[¹The fact that the servant is more important and praiseworthy than his lord is expressed in Doha no. 528 also which says “The servant is more important and praiseworthy than his lord if the former is sincere, wise and intelligent. For instance, Lord Ram had to construct a bridge to cross the mighty ocean, but his servant Hanuman had simply jumped over it to cross it.”

In Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 16-17 that precede Doha no. 120, the crow saint Kaagbhusund says “I believe that Lord Ram’s servant or follower or devotee is greater and more important than the Lord himself. If one compares Lord Ram to an ocean, then wise men are like the cloud. If Lord Ram is like the tree of the sandalwood, then wise men are like the wind. {The water of the ocean is not drinkable, but the clouds convert it into rain which is sweet and drinkable. The sandalwood tree’s fragrance is spread far and wide by the gust of wind blowing away from it, and hence it is the wind that helps to spread the glory of the sandalwood tree. Otherwise it would have been little known and had remained obscure.}

²As for the virtues of having love and devotion being superior to anything else, Ram Charit Manas says in Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 49 that “to have love and devotion for the holy feet of Lord Ram is the best and the most beautiful of all means and ways to find one’s welfare”.

A similar idea is expressed in Tulsidas’ Vinai Patrika, verse no. 194, stanza no. 3 that says “in this world there is no dearth of ways to find spiritual bliss and happiness, such as acquiring Gyan (spiritual knowledge), practicing Vairagya (renunciation), doing Yoga (meditation), Japa (repetition of divine name of the Lord God), Tapa (penances), performing Yagya (fire sacrifices and other religious duties), and so on. But without having sincere love and devotion for Lord Ram all of them are futile and meaningless just like the waves in an artificial ocean of desires having its resemblance in the mirage seen in the hot desert.”]

566. कलि पाषंड प्रचार प्रबल पाप पावँर पतित ।
तुलसी उभय अधार राम नाम सुरसरि सलिल ॥

566. kali pāṣaṇḍa pracāra prabala pāpa pāvam̐ra patita.
tulasī ubhaya adhāra rāma nāma surasari salila..

In Kali-yug, pretensions, haughtiness, boasts and deceit are very widespread. Everywhere one sees sinful, evil and lowly persons who have abandoned their rightful path and fallen from their principles.

Tulsidas says that in this fearful moral situation, there are only two practical means or ways to overcome all (spiritual) hurdles and find liberation—one is the holy Name of Lord Ram (who is an incarnate Supreme Being), and the other is the holy water of river Ganges (which is said to have originated from the toe of Lord Vishnu, the cosmic form of the Supreme Being, and therefore possesses mystical powers of purification). (566)

[Refer also to Dohawali's verse nos. 57-63, 126-129, 140-143, 156-157, 171-177, 567-569.

In Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 27 it is said "in Kali-yug, there is no right deed, no devotion for Lord God, and no wisdom and enlightenment; the only hope of succour is Lord Ram's holy name".

The same idea is expressed in Tulsidas' Barvai Ramayan, verse no. 48 that says "In Kali-yug, there is no Gyan (wisdom and enlightenment), no Viraag (renunciation and detachment from falsehood and materialism), no Yoga and Samadhi (meditation and its higher state of transcendental existence). Oh Tulsidas! Don't get confused. Do Japa (repetition) of the holy name of Lord Ram without any doubts and interruption."

The holiness of the water of river Ganges is praised in Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 17-20, and in Kavitaawali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 145-147. Both these books have been published in English by this author separately.]

567. रामचंद्र मुख चंद्रमा चित चकोर जब होइ ।
राम राज सब काज सुभ समय सुहावन सोइ ॥

567. rāmacandra mukha candramā cita cakōra jaba hō'i.
rāma rāja saba kāja subha samaya suhāvana sō'i..

That moment when the mind and heart of a person becomes like that of the bird known as Chakor (the Indian red-legged partridge) which fixes its gaze at the full moon without looking anywhere else, i.e. when the devotee's mind and heart constantly remembers the divine form of Lord Ram with great devotion and affection just like the Chakor that constantly looks at the beauteous face of the full moon—then wise ones say that such a moment should be regarded as the most auspicious and fruitful in a person's life. This moment is as fruitful and auspicious as the time when Lord Ram actually ruled over his kingdom on earth, and its citizens had the good fortune of daily getting a divine glimpse of the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Ram who lived in their midst. Those times were exceptionally auspicious, happy and fruitful for the devotees.

[To wit, though the Lord is not physically present now, but if one constantly and sincerely remembers the Lord mentally, and has heart-felt deep love and devotion for the Lord, then the spiritual benefits that such a devotee gets in the present is the same as the one got during the actual reign of Lord Ram on earth during the age of Treta-yug.

For all practical purposes, the Lord is actually present before a devotee at all times of existence if the latter has firm devotion and deep affection for him.

The central idea of this Doha is that the moment in a man's life when he remembers the Lord God is the best and the most auspicious one. Therefore, if a person is able to remember the Lord in all moments of his mundane life then his entire life becomes one seamless form of meditation, and this enables the Lord to be close to him each and every moment throughout life.

This closeness with the Lord can take many forms, such as serving the Lord God by offering all deeds to him, seeing the Lord God in each unit and aspect of this creation, remembering the Lord God's holy name and constantly repeating it silently inside one's Mana (mind and heart), having complete faith and devotion for the Lord God, and so on.

One of the many ways that this particular Doha advocates is to remember the Lord's divine form and his glories during each moment of a man's life.] (567)

[This Doha also appears in Tulsidas' book titled 'Ram Agya Prashnawali', and appears in it as no. 6/4/4.

Lord Ram's face was so beautiful to look at that he has repeatedly been addressed as 'Ram Chandra'—Ram who is like the full moon. For instance, when the Lord had gone to the forest, the people who lived in the villages and hamlets falling on the way gathered to have a divine glimpse of the Lord. They were so much mesmerized by the bewitching beauty of the Lord's face which resembled a full moon that they looked at it fixedly, and this sight gave them immense happiness and joy—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 115.

In another instance we find that when the sages and hermits of the forest gathered around the Lord in his hermitage, he sat in their midst facing them, and all of them watched the Lord's stunningly beautiful full moon-like face just like the Chakor gazes at the full moon—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 12.]

568. बीज राम गुन गन नयन जल अंकुर पुलकालि ।
सुकृती सुतन सुखेत बर बिलसत तुलसी सालि ।।

568. bīja rāma guna gana nayana jala aṅkura pulakāli.
sukṛtī sutana sukhēta bara bilasata tulasī sāli..

[Tulsidas uses the example of the farmer's field and the process of getting an excellent harvest to describe how one can develop the best form of love and devotion for Lord Ram.]

When the auspicious 'seeds' symbolizing Lord Ram's glories and virtues that are divine and holy by their inherent nature are sown in a fertile soil of an excellent 'field' representing a person's body that is free from sins and vices (i.e. the person has voluntarily abstained from any unrighteous and impure deeds), and then these seeds are 'watered' with tears of pure devotion and love for the Lord (i.e. when the person's eyes well-up with tears of exhilaration and joy as soon as he remembers the Lord), and when he feels so ecstatic that tears begin to roll down from his eyes as soon as he remembers the Lord and his divine form, holy name, auspicious deeds etc.—according to Tulsidas it is only then that a new 'sprout' representing ecstasy and exhilaration accompanied by bliss and joy of success in realizing Lord Ram's love and devotion comes to the surface.

In due course of time, this effort produces a rich ‘harvest’ (that symbolizes an excellent, the most vibrant and the best quality of ‘Bhakti’ for the Lord God that translates into the purest form of devotion, love and affection for the Lord, as well as complete submission before the Lord that leads the person’s soul to merge with its primary source, the cosmic Soul, when the ‘crop’ is finally harvested and gives the ‘farmer’, the devotee, his due reward). (568)

[One reaps what one sows. If one sows good seeds, one gets a good harvest. If one sows faulty seeds, the harvest is ruined, and then there is no use blaming the rains, or the soil or the climate for a bad harvest.

If a man spends his time remaining indulgent in the affairs of the gross world of material sense objects, and then blames his bad luck for his miseries and mental restlessness, then no one is to be blamed for the person’s misfortunes than he himself. Such a man who has distanced himself from the Lord’s grace, and the bliss that automatically comes with the remembrance of the Lord and his holy name, and then seeks happiness in the world which is inherently characterized by unhappiness, torments and miseries, is never expected to find true peace and happiness in his life.

On the other hand, a man whose mind and heart remain close to a source that is an eternal fount of spiritual bliss, peace, beatitude and felicity, i.e. the remembrance of Lord Ram who personifies these grand spiritual qualities, is bound to be affected by them. It is like the case of getting the effects of one’s company. If one keeps the company of the world, he is certain to be affected by the latter’s qualities—i.e. he cannot remain peaceful and contented. On the contrary, if one keeps the company of Lord Ram, he is definitely going to enjoy peace and bliss that characterize the Lord.

Now, let us examine the role of the body. If a farmer sows the best quality of seed in a bad soil, then no matter how hard he tries, no matter how much he waters the field and how good the rains are and the favourite the climate is, the crop will be ruined. Similar is the case with the man. His body is the habitat of the mind and the heart. It is the mind that remembers the Lord and guides a man in all his intellectual pursuits. It is the heart where devotion, affection, love and a desire to surrender before the Supreme Lord sprout. If the body is involved in wrong-doings, the mind and the heart cannot escape the negative influence. For instance, if a man stands for a whole day in blazing sun, he cannot escape the negative effects of the sun’s heat inspite of his drinking a lot of water to keep hydrated. The proper intake of water may prevent him from dying due to dehydration, but this is not the only problem that the heat of the sun causes on the health of the person.

When the body is kept pure by observing the laws of Dharma, for instance it does not do anything that is unrighteous and improper, it helps others instead of being a cause of pain to them, it worships the Lord God and does everything in this world as a means of selfless service to the Lord, it repeats the holy name of the Lord instead of indulging in loose worldly banter, it sees, touches, smells and eats proper things as advised by the scriptures instead of things that sort of pollute the inner self of the person, then natural positive vibes and a dynamic spiritual energy field are generated from such actions that would have corresponding positive and constructive effects on the mind and the heart.

A clean and refreshed body helps the man to keep his mind and heart fresh, clean and pure. Just like diseases can be avoided by practicing proper hygiene for the body, the purity and holiness of the mind and the heart can be maintained and enhanced by ensuring purity and holiness of the physical body where these two vital components (mind and heart) reside.

The mind and the heart are like the two legs that help a person in his spiritual pursuit. While the mind helps a spiritual aspirant to analyse the world and decide for himself the goal that he wants to reach, the heart helps him to actually move in this direction, because if a man does anything ‘half-heartedly’ then success eludes him. The mind helps him to determine convincingly what is true and what is false in this world, what will give him peace and what will heap him with misery, what will lead to his remaining bound and gagged in fetters of delusions and spiritual bondages that would lead to his ruin, and what will give him liberation and deliverance for all times to come, the heart on the other hand helps him to nurture such emotions as love, devotion, faith, submission, loyalty, honesty etc. towards his chosen goal which will ultimately help him to realise or attain that goal which the mind has helped him to set for himself.

It must be remembered here that the Atma, the pure consciousness of the individual which is his true ‘self’ and a personified microcosmic form of the cosmic Consciousness that is known as the Parmatma, the Supreme Atma that is the Lord of the entire creation, lives in the heart. The mind is the habitat of the intellect, the sub-conscious and the faculties of reasoning and analysis. The mind diverts the efforts of a man to any goal, and therefore if the mind decides that this goal is to be Lord Ram because that is the truthful destiny for the soul, the Atma, it is only then that the man will make efforts by his body in this direction. He will divert all his activities and deeds in the realisation of this noble and holy goal.

Then his mind would advise him the various options open to him—such as doing meditation and contemplation, practicing renunciation and dispassion, remembering the Lord and his glorious deeds, reading the scriptures and understanding the ‘truth’ explained by them instead of reading books that pull the mind towards the world and its delusions that churn the soul in a vortex of illusionary charms and transient happiness.

Like the wise farmer who ensure his future happiness by being careful in the very beginning when he selects the proper seeds that would suit the type of soil available and also tests if the soil is fertile or not, then spends a lot of time and energy to properly prepare the field by ploughing and tilling it, and once the seeds are sown he ensures that proper arrangement is made for irrigation, then when new sprouts appear he carefully tends them against weeds and worms, and later on against birds and insects when the crop is in full bloom, a wise and intelligent man ensures his spiritual well-being and happiness by cultivating devotion and love for Lord God. For this desire to bear fruits, he prepares the ground by first keeping his body pure and clean from the corruptions of the material world. Then he sows the seed of love and devotion in his heart, and uses the instrument of the mind to enable him to achieve this goal intelligently and fruitfully, without getting distracted and committing any mistakes. When the crop ripens, then just like the happy farmer who exhilarates at the sight of a blooming harvest, the spiritual seeker enjoys a surge of natural ecstasy that erupts spontaneously in his inner-self at the very thought of Lord Ram.]

569. तुलसी सहित सनेह नित सुमिरहु सीता राम ।
सगुन सुमंगल सुभ सदा आदि मध्य परिनाम ।।

569. tulasī sahita sanēha nita sumirahu sītā rāma.
saguna sumaṅgala subha sadā ādi madhya parināma..

Tulsidas advises that one should constantly remember the beauteous and auspicious divine form of Lord Sri Ram with full love and devotion. By doing so it would be auspicious and highly beneficial for a spiritual aspirant as it would ensure his all-round well-being and welfare in all the three phases of time in this world—i.e. his past, his present and his future will be well taken care of. (569)

[This Doha appears in Ram Prashnawali, as no. 3/3/7.

Refer also to Dohawali, verse nos. 566-567, 570 in this context.

A slight variation of this idea is expressed by Tulsidas in Vinati Patrika, verse no. 228, stanza no. 1 that says—“For a person for whom the holy name of Lord Ram is dearer than the Lord himself—everything is auspicious for him in this age of Kali-yug. His past, present and future that represent the three phases of life in Kali-yug, all of them become auspicious and holy for him”.]

570. पुरुषारथ स्वारथ सकल परमारथ परिनाम ।
सुलभ सिद्धि सब साहिबी सुमिरत सीता राम ॥

570. puruṣāratha svāratha sakala paramāratha parināma.
sulabha sid'dhi saba sāhibī sumirata sītā rāma..

As soon as a person remembers Lord Sita-Ram (i.e. Lord Ram along with his divine consort Sita) it becomes possible for him to have access to all the Siddhis (successes, achievements and powers, both the temporal as well as the spiritual) alongside establishment of lordship, authority and control over everything else in this world.

All his desires are fulfilled and his efforts rewarded, whether they are related to this material world or pertain to the spiritual world. Finally, as an added bonus, such a lucky man attains liberation and deliverance for his soul. (570)

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(1.4) Kavitawali Ramayan:

[The book ‘Kavitawali’ of Goswami Tulsidas is also often-times referred to as ‘Kavitawali Ramayan’ as it narrates the entire story of Lord Ram that is universally known as the epic ‘Ramayana’ in a sepecial poetic style called ‘Kavitta’.

The glory, the holiness, the divinity and the majesty of Lord Ram’s holy Name is the dominant theme in Kavitawali’s last chapter called Uttar Kand. Here we shall read an assortment of these verses, viz. 29, 37, 65-82, 89-93, 127 and 178 as these are relevant to the theme of our present book, which is: ‘The glory of Lord Ram’s holy Name’.]

Uttar Kand, Verse no. 29:-

सुनु कान दिएँ, नितु नेमु लिएँ रघुनाथहिके गुनगाथहि रे।
 सुखमंदिर सुंदर रूपु सदा उर आनि धरें धनु-भाथहि रे॥
 रसना निसि-बासर सादर सों तुलसी! जपु जानकीनाथहि रे।
 करु संग सुसील सुसंतन सों, तजि कूर, कपंथ कुसाथहि रे॥29॥

29. sunu kāna di'ēm, nitu nēmu li'ēm raghunāthahikē gunagāthahi rē.
 sukhamandira suṁdara rūpu sadā ura āni dharēm dhanu-bhāthahi rē..
 rasanā nisi-bāsara sādara sōm tulasī! japu jānakīnāthahi rē.
 karu saṅga susīla susantana sōm, taji kūra, kapantha kusāthahi rē..29..

Verse no. 7/29—[Tulsidas gives this wise advice—] 'Oh Tulsidas! Hear the virtuous stories of Sri Ram with full ears (i.e. with full attention and devotion). Always remember (think of) Lord Sri Ram's beauteous and charming countenance (form) that holds a bow and arrow, for he is the abode of all bliss. Chant Sri Ram's holy Name respectfully with your tongue day and night. Always keep the company of virtuous, noble and saintly persons, and forsake or abandon any kind of contact or dealings with persons who are deceitful. Avoid the path that is unrighteous and improper, and abhor bad company.'

Uttar Kand, Verse no. 37:-

सियराम-सरूपु अगाध अनूप बिलोचन-मीननको जलु है।
 श्रुति रामकथा, मुख रामको नामु, हिऐँ पुनि रामहिको थलु है॥
 मति रामहि सों, गति रामहि सों, रति रामसों, रामहि को बलु है।
 सबकी न कहै, तुलसीके मतेँ इतनो जग जीवनको फलु है॥37॥

37. siyarāma-sarūpu agādha anūpa bilōcana-mīnanakō jalu hai.
 śruti rāmakathā, mukha rāmakō nāmu, hi'ēm puni rāmahikō thalu hai..
 mati rāmahi sōm, gati rāmahi sōm, rati rāmasōm, rāmahi kō balu hai.
 sabakī na kahai, tulasīkē matēm itanō jaga jīvanakō phalu hai..37..

Verse no. 7/37—The peerless and most beauteous image (vision) of Lord Ram and Sita is like a fathomless body of water for the fish in the form of the eyes. To have ears that hear the stories of Lord Ram, the mouth that chants the name of Lord Ram, the heart in which Lord Ram resides, the mind and the intellect that is engrossed in the thoughts of Lord Ram, to have Lord Ram as the only reliance in this world, to have affection and devotion only for Lord Ram, and to regard Lord Ram as the only source of strength and support—Tulsidas says that he does not know about others, but for him (i.e. according to his wisdom) this is the only fruit (benefit) of taking birth (living) in this world as a living being.

Uttar Kand, verse nos. 65-82:-

स्वास्थ्यको साजु न समाजु परमास्थको,
 मोसो दगाबाज दूसरो न जगजाल है।
 कै न आयोँ, करौँ न करौँगो करतूति भली,
 लिखी न बिरंचिहूँ भलाई भूलि भाल है॥
 रावरी सपथ, रामनाम ही की गति मेरेँ,

इहाँ झूठे, झूठे सो तिलोक तिहूँ काल है ।
तुलसी को भलो पै तुम्हारे ही किएँ कृपाल,
कीजै न बिलंबु बलि, पानीभरी खाल है ।।65 ।।

65. svārathakō sāju na samāju paramārathakō,
mōsō dagābāja dūsarō na jagajāla hai.
kai na āyōm̐, karaum̐ na karauṅgō karatūti bhalī,
likhī na biran̐cihūm̐ bhalā'ī bhūli bhāla hai..
rāvarī sapatha, rāmanāma hī kī gati mērēm̐,
ihām̐ jhūṭhō, jhūṭhō sō tilōka tihūm̐ kāla hai.
tulasī kō bhalō pai tumhārēm̐ hī ki'ēm̐ krpāla,
kījai na bilambu bali, pānībharī khāla hai..65..

Verse no. 7/65—Tulsidas says, 'I do not possess anything to serve my interests or anything that would help in my salvation. There is no other cheat and deceitful person like me in this world. I have neither done, nor do, or shall do any good deed, even Brahma the creator had not, by oversight, destined any good for me. I swear by you, and I say truthfully oh Lord Ram that I have your name as my only hope, as my only succour and solace. If I speak a lie to you then I am a greatest liar in the three Lokas (heaven, earth, subterranean) and the three periods of time (past, present, future).'

Tulsidas says that his betterment and welfare can only be done by Lord Ram himself, so he requests the Lord not to delay further because his condition is akin to a water-filled bag made of hide. [Even as water-filled bag made of hide decays soon, so is the fate of Tulsidas. He has become old, and not much time is left. So he urges his Lord to hurry-up and waste no time in ensuring Tulsidas' emancipation and salvation.]

रागको न साजु, न बिरागु, जोग जाग जियँ
काया नहिँ छाड़ि देत ठाटिबो कुठाटको ।
मनोराजु करत अकाजु भयो आजु लागि,
चाहे चारु चीर, पै लहै न दूकु टाटको ।।
भयो करतारु बड़े कूरको कृपालु, पायो
नामप्रेमु-पारसु, हौँ लालची बराटको ।
'तुलसी' बनी है राम ! रावरें बनाएँ, ना तो
धोबी-कैसो कूकरु न घरको, न घाटको ।।66 ।।

66. rāgakō na sāju, na birāgu, jōga jāga jiyam̐
kāyā nahim̐ chāḍi dēta ṭhāṭibō kuṭhāṭakō.
manōrāju karata akāju bhayō āju lagi,
cāhē cāru cira, pai lahai na ṭūku ṭāṭakō..
bhayō karatāru baṛē kūrakō krpālu, pāyō
nāmaprēmu-pārasu, haum̐ lālacī barāṭakō.
'tulasī' banī hai rāma! rāvarēm̐ banā'ēm̐, nā tō
dhōbī-kaisō kūkaru na gharakō, na ghāṭakō..66..

Verse no. 7/66—'I do not possess material comforts that would satisfy the sense organs of my body, nor do I have the eclectic virtue of renunciation or detachment (that would make me feel contented with whatever I have). I do not do Yoga (meditation) and neither do I have the benefit of performing Vedic rituals. This body

of mine does not want to abandon (abstain from) bad deeds. Indulgences have created only losses and wants for me till now. The body wants to acquire and wear good clothes, but does not even get torn and tattered rags!

Oh merciful Lord! You had shown mercy even on this scoundrel. A cheap, mean and greedy man like me has laid his hands on your holy Name which is like Paaras (a stone which converts iron into gold on touch). [Just like a greedy man would grab such a Paaras stone as the panacea for all his misfortunes, Tulsidas has grabbed and clung to your holy Name as the only solution to all his problems.]

Oh Lord Ram! All this is due to you (i.e. whatever peace, happiness, respect and comfort I have is due to your mercy and the benevolence of your holy Name). Otherwise, like a washer-man's donkey, I was neither here nor there. [I could not possibly have imagined that I will get whatever good I have if it would not have been for you.]

ऊँचो मनु, ऊँची रुचि, भागु नीचो निपट ही,
 लोकरीति-लायक न, लंगर लबारु है।
 स्वारथु अगमु परमास्थकी कहा चली,
 पेटकी कठिन जगु जीवको जवारु है।।
 चाकरी न आकरी, न खेती, न बनिज-भीख,
 जानत न कूर कछु किसब कबारु है।
 तुलसीकी बाजी राखी रामहीके नाम, न तु
 भेंट पितरन को न मूड़हू में बारु है।।67।।

67. ūmṁcō manu, ūmṁcī ruci, bhāgu nīcō nipaṭa hī,
 lōkarīti-lāyaka na, laṅgara labāru hai.
 svārathu agamu paramārathakī kahā calī,
 pēṭakīm kaṭhina jagu jīvakō javāru hai..
 cākarī na ākarī, na khētī, na baniya-bhīkha,
 jānata na kūra kachu kisaba kabāru hai.
 tulasīkī bājī rākhī rāmahīkēm nāma, na tu
 bhēṇṭa pitarana kō na mūṛahū mēm bāru hai..67..

Verse no. 7/67—His (Tulsidas') desires are high and inclinations are also great, but he has a very poor luck. He is not fit for society (does not know proper social behaviour and how to please the people). He very mischievous and a big-mouthed blarney (chatter-box)!

For him (Tulsidas), even serving and providing for himself is difficult—what to talk of helping others. His hunger has made the world (life and existence) very burdensome for him. He has no steady occupation and a livelihood to help him feed himself—for he does not serve anyone permanently (on a salary basis; he is unemployed), he is neither a miner (digs for gold or other precious materials), nor does he possess a field (i.e. he is not a farmer), nor is he a merchant, nor a beggar, nor knows any other kind of business or vocation.

Tulsidas' only bet is on Sri Ram's holy Name. Otherwise he is so poor and wretched that he has not a single hair on his head to offer to his dead ancestors. [That is, he is abjectly poor, except possessing the gem in the form of Lord Ram's holy Name! Therefore he has no worry whatsoever.]

अपत-उतार, अपकारको अगारु, जग

जाकी छाँह छुएँ सहमत ब्याध-बाघको ।
 पातक-पुहुमि पालिबेको सहसाननु सो,
 काननु कपटको, पयोधि अपराधको ।।
 तुलसी-से बामको भो दाहिनो दयानिधानु,
 सुनत सिहात सब सिद्ध, साधु साधको ।
 रामनाम ललित-ललामु कियो लाखनिको,
 बड़ो कूर कायर कपूत-कौड़ी आधको ।।68 ।।

68. apata-utāra, apakārakō agāru, jaga
 jākī chām̐ha chu'ēm̐ sahamata byādha-bāghakō.
 pātaka-puhumi pālibēkō sahasānanu sō,
 kānanu kapaṭakō, payōdhi aparādhakō..
 tulasī-sē bāmakō bhō dāhinō dayānidhānu,
 sunata sihāta saba sid'dha, sādhu sādhakō.
 rāmanāma lalita-lalāmu kiyō lākhanikō,
 baṛō kūra kāyara kapūta-kaurī ādhakō..68..

Verse no. 7/68—This wretched (Tulsidas) is so shameless and ungrateful that his evil shadow is sufficient to instil fear even among the animals who are cruel and merciless.

He (Tulsidas) is like a hundred hooded serpent (Sesh Nath) as far as bearing the burden of sins like this serpent who bears the burden of earth on its hood. He is like a forest of deceit and an ocean of errors and faults.

‘Lord Ram has become benign and merciful on the mean, unwise and vain Tulsidas’—on hearing this, all the wise-ones, the saintly and holy-ones, and the spiritual seekers begin to praise Tulsidas (for his astounding good luck). Lord Ram’s holy and divine Name has converted a man who is worthless, wretched, coward and deceitful, and a most unworthy son of his parents, into a person who is as worthy and valuable as a beautiful gem worth millions.

सब अंग हीन, सब साधन बिहीन मन-
 बचन मलीन, हीन कुल करतूति हौं ।
 बुधि-बल-हीन, भाव-भगति-बिहीन, हीन
 गुन, ग्यानहीन, हीन भाग हूँ बिभूति हौं ।।
 तुलसी गरीब की गई-बहोर रामनामु,
 जाहि जपि जीहँ रामहू को बैठे धूति हौं ।
 प्रीति रामनामसों प्रतीति रामनामकी,
 प्रसाद रामनामकें पसारि पाय सूतिहौं ।।69 ।।

69. saba aṅga hīna, saba sādhana bihīna mana-
 bacana malīna, hīna kula karatūti haum̐.
 budhi-bala-hīna, bhāva-bhagati-bihīna, hīna
 guna, gyānahīna, hīna bhāga hūm̐ bibhūti haum̐..
 tulasī garība kī ga'i-bahōra rāmanāmu,
 jāhi japi jīham̐ rāmahū kō baiṭhō dhūti haum̐.
 prīti rāmanāmasōm̐ pratīti rāmanāmakī,
 prasāda rāmanāmakēm̐ pasāri pāya sūtihaum̐..69..

Verse no. 7/69—‘I lack the eightfold path of Yoga¹, all the aids and necessary things for comfortable survival in this world and liberation of the soul, am dark in mind and

speech, and am very downtrodden and lowly by birth, ancestry and deeds. I lack intellect, strength, good emotions, devotion, talents, knowledge, luck and fame. Only Lord Sri Ram's holy Name can give salvation to this wretched Tulsidas. By chanting the Lord's Name I have managed to even deceive Sri Ram (into believing that I'm a great devotee and a wise-one, whereas I am good-for-nothing).

I have love, devotion and faith only in Lord Ram's holy Name, and I sleep blissfully without any worries only due to the grace of Lord Ram's Name.' [In this verse, Tulsidas praises the glory of Sri Ram's holy Name.]

[¹The eight fold path of Yoga involves observance of certain principles These are briefly the following—(1) Yam or self restraint of the senses; (2) Niyam or observance of certain sacrosanct rules; (3) Aasan or postures for meditation; (4) Pranyam or breath control exercises for purification of the body and mind; (5) Pratyahar or withdrawal of the mind and its control; (6) Dhaarna or having a firm conviction, faith and belief on the sanctity and truthfulness of the chosen path; (7) Dhyan or contemplation and concentration of the faculties of the mind and intellect, such as visualizing the presence of the supreme Brahm in the point of the forehead between the two eyebrows; and (8) Samadhi or a perpetual trance-like state in which the aspirant loses all awareness of the external world and even himself, and remains perpetually in meditation.]

मेरे जान जबते हौ जीव है जनम्यो जग,
तबते बेसाह्यो दाम लोह, कोह, कामको ।
मन तिन्हीकी सेवा, तिन्ही सौ भाउ नीको,
बचन बनाइ कहौ 'हौ गुलामु रामको' ।।
नाथहूँ न अपनायो, लोक झूठी है परी, पै
प्रभुहूँ तेँ प्रबल प्रतापु प्रभुनामको ।
आपनी भलाई भलो कीजै तौ भलाई, न तौ
तुलीसीको खुलैगो खजानो खोटे दामको ।।70 ।।

70. mērēm jāna jabatēm haurṁ jīva hvai janamyō jaga,
tabatēm bēsāhyō dāma lōha, kōha, kāmako.
mana tinhīkī sēvā, tinhī sōm bhā'u nīkō,
bacana banā'i kahaurṁ 'haurṁ gulāmu rāmako'..
nāthahūm' na apanāyō, lōka jhūṭhī hvai parī, pai
prabhuhū tēm prabala pratāpu prabhunāmakō.
āpanīm bhalā'i bhalō kijai tau bhalā'i, na tau
tulīsikō khulaigō khajānō khōṭē dāmako..70..

Verse no. 7/70—'In my (Tulsidas') view, ever since I was born, I have been held captive by such negative traits as greed, anger and lust. [That is, these have over-powered me.]

Therefore, my mind serves them and loves them deeply. As such, I only pretend when I say that I am a servant of Sri Ram. [This is because my mind serves others—my mind is engrossed in feeding its desires for more and more of the things of this world, and when it is not satisfied it becomes angry.]

Oh Lord! Even you have not accepted me because I am unworthy, but I got false fame in the world (that I am your servant—because I constantly repeat your holy Name). But the magic is that the Lord's name is more powerful than the Lord himself. So, if you do me good because of your merciful nature, so much the better, otherwise

my deceitful and cunning nature would come out in the open. [Tulsidas says that if the Lord does not willingly accept him and provide him salvation, then he would keep repeating the Lord's holy and divine Name and force the Lord to care of him just because he takes the Lord's Name inspite of his being totally unworthy of receiving any grace and mercy from the Lord! Here, Tulsidas pleads with Sri Ram to protect his honour because the glory of Sri Ram's name is at stake.]

जोग न बिरागु, जप, जाग, तप, त्यागु, ब्रत,
तीरथ न धर्म जानौ, बेदबिधि किमि है।
तुलसी-सो पोच न भयो है, नहि हैहै कहुँ,
सोचै सब, याके अघ कैसे प्रभु छमिहैं।।
मेरें तौ न डरु, रघुबीर! सुनौ, साँची कहौ,
खल अनखैहैं तुम्हैं, सज्जन न गमिहैं।
भले सुकृतीके संग मोहि तुलाँ तौलिए तौ,
नामकें प्रसाद भारु मेरी ओर नमिहैं।।71।।

71. jōga na birāgu, japa, jāga, tapa, tyāgu, brata,
tīratha na dharma jānaum, bēdabidhi kimi hai.
tulasī-sō pōca na bhayō hai, nahi hvaihai kahūm,
sōcaim saba, yākē agha kaisē prabhu chamihaim..
mērēm tau na ḍaru, raghubīra! sunau, sām̃cī kahaurm,
khala anakhaihaim tumhaim, sajjana na gamihaim.
bhalē sukr̥ṭikē saṅga mōhi tulām̃ tauli'ē tau,
nāmakēm prasāda bhāru mērī ōra namihaim..71..

Verse no. 7/71—'I do not know that eight fold path of Yoga, nor the grand virtues of renunciation, chanting of Mantras, Vedic rituals, penance, detachment, fasting and other religious observances, pilgrimage or the laws of Dharma (righteousness). I also do not know the laws of the Vedas. No one was, and shall be, as degenerate and lowly as Tulsidas is. That is why people wonder how my sins will be ever forgiven (i.e. how I shall be ever redeemed).

Oh Lord Raghubir (another name of Lord Ram since he was born in the race of king Raghu of Ayodhya)! Listen, I tell you the truth, that still I'm not afraid. If you forgive me, the wicked will be unhappy with you (because you would have foiled their design and intention of keeping me in their fold), but gentlemen and saintly people would be pleased (because they expect such a magnanimous and benevolent gesture from you). If you weigh me against some great man of noble deeds, the scale will tilt in my favour because I have your holy Name with me!' [Tulsidas says here that all the noble deeds are no match for Lord Ram's name, its great glory and marvellous effects.]

जातिके, सुजातिके, कुजातिके पेटागि बस
खाए दूक सबके, बिदित बात दुर्नी सो।
मानस-बचन-कायँ किए पाप सतिभायँ,
रामको कहाइ दासु दगाबाज पुनी सो।
रामनामको प्रभाउ, पाउ, महिमा, प्रतापु,
तुलसी-सो जग मनिअत महामुनी-सो।
अतिहीं अभागो, अनुरागत न रामपद,
मूढ़! एतो बड़ो अचिरिजु देखि-सुनी सो।।72।।

72. jātikē, sujātikē, kujātikē pētāgi basa
 khā'ē ṭuka sabakē, bidita bāta dunīṁ sō.
 mānasa-bacana-kāyam' ki'ē pāpa satibhāyam',
 rāmakō kahā'i dāsu dagābāja punī sō.
 rāmanāmakō prabhā'u, pā'u, mahimā, pratāpu,
 tulasī-sō jaga mani'ata mahāmunī-sō.
 atihīṁ abhāgō, anurāgata na rāmapada,
 mūrha! ētō barō aciriju dēkhi-sunī sō..72..

Verse no. 7/72—'Due to hunger, I begged from all types of people—belonging to all castes, creed, sects and clans; this fact is known to all in this world. I have committed a lot of sins by my thought, speech and deeds. And though I called myself Sri Ram's servant, I remained deceitful and cunning.

Now, look at the glory and the great effect of Lord Ram's holy Name that a wretched and rascal like Tulsidas is regarded by the world as a great and holy man (like Valmiki). Oh Idiot! You are really a fool! After seeing such a miracle it is so unfortunate that you still do not have an abiding, true and sincere love and devotion in Lord Ram's holy feet.'

जायो कुल मंगन, बधावनो बजायो, सुनि
 भयो परितापु पापु जननी-जनकको ।
 बारेतें ललात-बिललात द्वार-द्वार दीन,
 जानत हो चारि फल चारि ही चनकको ।।
 तुलसी सो साहेब समर्थको सुसेवकु है,
 सुनत सिहात सोचु बिधिहू गनकको ।
 नामुराम! रावरो सयानो किधौं बावरो,
 जो करत गिरीतें गरु तृनतें तनकको ।।73 ।।

73. jāyō kula maṅgana, badhāvanō bajāyō, suni
 bhayō paritāpu pāpu janani-janakakō.
 bārētēm lalāta-bilalāta dvāra-dvāra dīna,
 jānata hō cāri phala cāri hī canakakō..
 tulasī sō sāhēba samarthakō susēvaku hai,
 sunata sihāta sōcu bidhihū ganakakō.
 nāmurāma! rāvarō sayānō kidhaum bāvarō,
 jō karata girītēm garu trṇatēm tanakakō..73..

Verse no. 7/73—'I was born in a poor Brahmin household, and there were celebrations. But my parents were unhappy (because of their poverty, they regarded me as a burden—another mouth to feed). Then, since I was born in poverty, since childhood I had to wander from house to house greedily, writhing with hunger (for morsels of food). I regarded four grains of gram that I got by begging equivalent to the four celebrated fruits of wealth, dharma, fulfilled desire, and salvation.

Now Tulsidas has become a servant (devotee) of Lord Ram—on hearing this, even an astrologer like Brahma (the creator) is worried and full of envy. [Brahma is

astonished that fate had destined me to ever remain wretched and lowly, then how come I have become so holy, exalted and famous? Surely, it is only due to the influence of Lord Ram's name.]

I don't know whether your name (Lord Ram's holy Name) is clever and cunning, or a mad maverick, for it can make one who is even humbler-than-grass (i.e. as useless as a weed) into one who is heavier-than-a-mountain (i.e. transform the lowest of the lowly into higher than the lofty and the most exalted).'

बेदहूँ पुरान कही, लोकहूँ बिलोकिअत,
 रामनाम ही सों रीझें सकल भलाई है।
 कासीहूँ मरत उपदेसत महेसु सोई,
 साधना अनेक चितई न चित लाई है।
 छाछीको ललात जे, ते रामनामकें प्रसाद,
 खात, खुनसात सोँधे दूधकी मलाई है।
 रामराज सुनिअत राजनीतिकी अवधि,
 नामु राम! रावरो तौ चामकी चलाई है॥७४॥

74. bēdahūṁ purāna kahī, lōkahūṁ bilōki'ata,
 rāmanāma hī sōṁ rījhēm sakala bhalāī hai.
 kāsihū marata upadēsata mahēsu sōī,
 sādhanā anēka citaī na cita lāī hai.
 chāchikō lālāta jē, tē rāmanāmakēm prasāda,
 khāta, khunasāta sōndhē dūdhakī malāī hai.
 rāmarāja suni'ata rājanītikī avadhi,
 nāmu rāma! rāvarō tau cāmakī calāī hai..74..

Verse no. 7/74—'It is said by the Vedas and the Purans as well as seen in this world that having love for Lord's Name is beneficial in every way. When one dies in Kashi (Varanasi), Lord Mahadev (Shiva) also gives salvation (by uttering this holy Name in the ears of the dying man). He (Lord Shiva) has not paid any attention to any other means (of salvation). Those who were eager to have even butter-milk to feed their stomach (for even this humblest of food was not available to them) are now reluctant to eat scented cream of milk. [That is, those who were earlier so unfortunate that they couldn't find anything to eat or drink, are now so well and over fed that they reject the choicest of food, thanks to the glory of Sri Ram's holy and divine Name.]

In the kingdom of Sri Ram, political science is practiced in its best form! That is why oh Lord it appears that your Name has minted coins out of worthless hide (i.e. even worthless people have become valuable due to Sri Ram's holy Name). [The Lord's holy Name has given importance to worthless people so as to increase manifold the number of faithful followers of Sri Ram just like politicians pamper the vast number of ordinary and the middle class people in order to garner their support and votes.]'

सोच-संकटनि सोचु संकटु परत, जर
 जरत, प्रभाउ नाम ललित ललामको।
 बूढ़िऔ तरति बिगरीऔ सुधरति बात,
 होत देखि दाहिनो सुभाउ बिधि बामको॥
 भागत अभागु, अनुरागत बिरागु, भागु
 जागत आलसि तुलसीहू-से निकामको।

धाई धारि फिरिकै गोहारि हितकारी होति,
आई मीचु मिटति जपत रामनामको ॥75॥

75. sōca-saṅkaṭani sōcu saṅkaṭu parata, jara
jarata, prabhā'u nāma lalita lalāmakō.
būḍiau tarati bigarī'au sudharati bāta,
hōta dēkhi dāhinō subhā'u bidhi bāmakō..
bhāgata abhāgu, anurāgata birāgu, bhāgu
jāgata ālasi tulasīhū-sē nikāmakō.
dhā'ī dhāri phirikai gōhāri hitakārī hōti,
ā'ī mīcu miṭati japata rāmanāmakō..75..

Verse no. 7/75—'Lord Ram's holy Name is a Mantra (a spiritual formula) that is beautiful and the best amongst all the Mantras. It has such a stupendous magical effect that worries and troubles themselves get worried and troubled, and fever itself gets tormented by heat when one invokes this eclectic and powerful Mantra. [That is, the Lord's holy Name can chase away all worries and troubles, and it can eliminate all causes of torments that afflict a devotee of the Lord.]

The Name of the Lord is so powerful and effective that it can make a drowned (sunk, submerged, capsized) boat cross over to the other side (of the river), undo things that have already been finished, and make even a malevolent and unfavourable Brahma (the creator) into one who is most favourable, benign and benevolent. Seeing a person who invokes Lord Ram's holy Name, misfortunes run away (i.e. they leave Sri Ram's devotee alone), renunciation begins to show fondness for such a man (i.e. such a person begins to inculcate the grand virtue of dispassion and renunciation, called Vairagya), and luck begins to shine upon Tulsidas who is luckless and indolent. An army of thieves becomes a protector (instead of robbing), and even death is averted by chanting Lord Ram's holy Name.'

आँधरो अधम जड़ जाजरो जराँ जवनु
सूकरकेँ सावक ढकाँ ढकेल्यो मगमें ।
गिरो हिउँ हहरि 'हराम हो, हराम हन्यो',
हाय! हाय! करत परीगो कालफगमें ॥
'तुलसी' बिसोक है त्रिलोकपतिलोक गयो
नामकेँ प्रताप, बात बिदित है जगमें ।
सोई रामनामु जो सनेहसों जपत जनु,
ताकी महिमा क्यों कही है जाति अगमें ॥76॥

76. āmḍharō adhama jaṛa jājarō jarām' javanu
sūkarakēm sāvaka ḍhakām' ḍhakēlyō magamēm.
girō hi'ēm' hahari 'harāma hō, harāma han'yō',
hāya! hāya! karata parīgō kālaphagamēm..
'tulasi' bisōka hvai trilōkapatilōka gayō
nāmakēm pratāpa, bāta bidita hai jagamēm.
sō'ī rāmanāmu jō sanēhasōm japata janu,
tākī mahimā kyōm kahī hai jāti agamēm..76..

Verse no. 7/76—A young piglet pushed a sinful, blind, idiotic and an old wretched Muslim on the way. He fell down and started crying 'Oh! This Haraam (an abusive

expletive) has killed me', and so crying, he died. Tulsidas says that the Muslim was rid of all sorrows, and he went straight to the holy abode of Lord Ram—this is well known in this world. [The word 'Haraam' has 2 parts: Ha+Raam. So Tulsidas says that though he was abusing the piglet, the very pronouncement of Sri Ram's name 'Ram', even if un-intentionally and as part of an abuse, was enough to liberate the Muslim man and give him deliverance.]

The same Lord Ram's holy Name, if chanted with love and devotion, can naturally do wonders. Say, who can describe its great glories?

जापकी न तप-खपु कियो, न तमाइ जोग,
जाग न बिराग, त्याग, तीरथ न तनको ।
भाईको भरोसो न खरो-सो बैरु बैरीहू सौं,
बलु अपनो न, हितु जननी न जनको ।।
लोकको न डरु, परलोकको न सोचु, देव-
सेवा न सहाय, गर्बु धामको न धनको ।
रामही के नामतेँ जो होई सोई नीको लागै,
ऐसोई सुभाउ कछु तुलसीके मनको ।। 77 ।।

77. jāpakī na tapa-khapu kiyō, na tamā'i jōga,
jāga na birāga, tyāga, tīratha na tanakō.
bhā'ikō bharōsō na kharō-sō bairu bairīhū sōm,
balu apanō na, hitū janani na janakō..
lōkakō na ḍaru, paralōkakō na sōcu, dēva-
sēvā na sahāya, garbu dhāmakō na dhanakō.
rāmahi kē nāmatēm jō hō'ī sō'ī nīkō lāgai,
aisō'ī subhā'u kachu tulasīkē manakō..77..

Verse no. 7/77—'I had never chanted or repeated the Lord's holy Mantras (i.e. I have never done Japa), nor have I undergone the hardships of Tapasya (i.e. I have not done penances and observed austerities), and I have no desire for doing Yoga (meditation practices), Yagya (rituals of fire sacrifice), Vairagya (the virtue of renunciation), Tyag (to leave all attachments), and Tirath (going on pilgrimage).

I do not have reliance (faith) in my brother (i.e. I do not expect that my brother would ever come to my aid when needed), nor do I have any enmity towards my enemy (i.e. though I have no animosity towards my enemy, he still won't come to help me). I have no support of my own strength, nor do I have helpful parents. But in spite of such loneliness and lack of support from any quarter, I have no fear either of this world nor any worry of the one after death. I have no strength that is usually derived by doing service to the Gods (for I have never served anyone except Sri Ram). I also have nothing to be proud of as far as wealth and property is concerned.'

Tulsidas says that his natural habit, tendency and temperament are such that whatever happens (or is achieved) on the strength of, or by the virtue of Lord Ram's holy Name appears good for him, and is gladly acceptable by him.

ईसु न, गनेसु न, दिनेसु न, धनेसु न,
सुरेसु, सुर, गौरि, गिरपति नहि जपने ।
तुम्हरेई नामको भरोसो भव तरिबेको,
बैठे-उठे, जागत-बागत, सोएँ, सपने ।।
तुलसी है बावरो सो रावरोई रावरी सौं,

रावरेऊ जानि जियँ कीजिए जु अपने ।
जानकीरमन मेरे! रावरें बदनु फेरें,
ठाउँ न समाउँ कहाँ, सकल निरपने ॥78॥

78. īsu na, ganēsu na, dinēsu na, dhanēsu na,
surēsu, sura, gauri, girapati nahi japanē.
tumharē'ī nāmakō bharōsō bhava taribēkō,
baiṭhēm-uthēm, jāgata-bāgata, sō'ēm, sapanēm..
tulasī hai bāvarō sō rāvarō'ī rāvarī saum,
rāvarē'ū jāni jiyam' kiji'ē ju apanē.
jānakīramana mērē! rāvarēm badanu phērēm,
ṭhā'um' na samā'um' kahām, sakala nirapanē..78..

Verse no. 7/78—'I will not chant the name of Shiva, Ganesh, Sun, Kuber, Indra, Devas, Gauri or Brahma etc. (i.e. I shall not worship any one other Lord except my beloved Lord Sri Ram).

In this world, oh Lord, I have only your (Sri Ram's) name as my succour and support while awake, asleep, wandering, sitting or dreaming etc. It is the only means by which I can get liberation and deliverance.

Though Tulsidas is (considered) mad, but I swear oh Lord that he is yours. [Tulsidas affirms his loyalty towards Lord Ram.] Keeping this in mind you (Sri Ram) should accept him.

Oh my dear Janki Raman (Sita's Lord, Sri Ram)! [By using the word 'Jankiraman', Tulsidas wants to say that Sri Ram is as dear to him as he is to Janki or Sita, the Lord's divine consort.] If you turn away from me, I shall have no place to live; all the people except you are strangers for me.'

[The reader should not be confused by the use of 'I' and 'Tulsidas' simultaneously. The speaker is Tulsidas himself. Sometimes he speaks in the first person narrative, and sometimes in the third person. Similarly, it would be often seen that he addresses himself with the pronoun 'he' as if he was addressing or referring to a second or a third person. This is his typical style of writing. In all these cases, Tulsidas is addressing only himself, but in such a manner that makes it appear that he is an independent observer.]

जाहिर जहानमें जमानो एक भाँति भयो,
बैचिए बिबुधधेनु रासभी बेसाहिए ।
ऐसेऊ कराल कलिकालमें कृपाल! तेरे
नामकें प्रताप न त्रिताप तन दाहिए ॥
तुलसी तिहारो मन-बचन-करम, तैंहि
नातें नेह-नेमु निज ओरतें निबाहिए ।
रंकके नेवाज रघुराज! राजा राजनिके,
उमरि दराज महाराज तेरी चाहिए ॥79॥

79. jāhira jahānamēm jamānō ēka bhāmṭi bhayō,
bēnci'ē bibudhādheṇu rāsabhī bēsāhi'ē.
aisē'ū karāla kalikālamēm krpāla! tērē
nāmakēm pratāpa na tritāpa tana dāhi'ē..
tulasī tihārō mana-bacana-karama, tēnhi
nātēm nēha-nēmu nija ōratēm nibāhi'ē.

raṅkakē nēvāja raghurāja! rājā rājanikē,
umari darāja mahārāja tērī cāhi'ē..79..

Verse no. 7/79—This current era of Kaliyug has become famous for the foolishness of buying a donkey by selling a Kamdhenu cow (which is an all wish-fulfilling priceless cow from whom all desired objects can be obtained). [It means that people have become so stupid out of ignorance that they do not mind exchanging a most valuable thing for something that is worthless.]

Oh merciful Lord! Even in such an era (Kaliyug), it is the glory and greatness of your holy Name that the body does not burn in the 3-fires (known as the Traitap). [These three torments are called 'Daivik' or that caused due to malignant gods and stars, 'Daihiik' or those created by old age and diseases, and 'Bhautik' or those caused by worldly and existential problems.]

Tulsidas says, 'I am your devotee by thought, speech, deeds and actions (i.e. in all possible and imaginable ways). Due to this, I expect you to reciprocate, i.e. be loyal towards your ardent devotee, and be biased in favour of me.

Oh benefactor of the poverty-stricken and the unfortunate ones, oh the King of kings, oh the great King of Raghu's Dynasty (i.e. Sri Ram)! We pray that you live long (so that we live under your benevolent protection for-ever).'

स्वारथ सयानप, प्रपंचु परमारथ,
कहायो राम! रावरो हौं, जानत जहान है।
नामकें प्रताप बाप! आजु लौं निबाही नीकें,
आगेको गोसाईं! स्वामी सबल सुजान है।।
कलिकी कुचालि देखि दिन-दिन दूनी, देव!
पाहरुई चोर हेरि हिए हहरान है।
तुलसीकी, बलि, बार-बारही सँभार कीबी,
जद्यपि कृपानिधानु सदा सावधान है।।80।।

80. svāratha sayānapa, prapaṅcu paramāratha,
kahāyō rāma! rāvarō hauṁ, jānata jahāna hai.
nāmakēm pratāpa bāpa! āju laum nibāhī nīkēm,
āgēkō gōsā'īm! svāmī sabala sujāna hai..
kalikī kucālī dēkhi dina-dina dūnī, dēva!
pāharū'ī cōra hēri hi'ē haharāna hai.
tulasīkī, bali, bāra-bārahīm sam̐bhāra kībī,
jadyapi krpānidhānu sadā sāvadhāna hai..80..

Verse no. 7/80—'I am alert, clever and wise where my self interest is involved, and un-interested, evasive and indifferent where others are concerned. Oh Sri Ram! Still I am called 'yours' and the world knows me as such. Oh Father! Your name has sustained me till now, and oh Lord, for the future also, you are all-knowing and fully capable of sustaining me. Oh Lord! Seeing the cunningness and deceit of Kaliyug increase day by day, and finding the sentry (guard) a thief, my heart has shaken (I am very afraid that there is no way for salvation for me, and I'll be robbed of it). [Kaliyug is very cunning, and it throws such illusions of charm and happiness that a creature remains trapped in its quagmire. Tulsidas says that whatever good virtues he possesses are under threat of getting lost under the onslaught of the evil effects of Kaliyug.]'

Tulsidas prays that though the Lord is always alert and he needn't remind the Lord over and over again, but still he can't have patience and reminds him (the Lord) to please take special care of Tulsidas constantly (so that he gets liberation and deliverance).

दिन-दिन दूनो देखि दारिद्र, दुकालु, दुखु,
 दुरितु दुराजु सुख-सुकृत सकोच है।
 मार्गे पैत पावत पचारि पातकी प्रचंड,
 कालकी करालता, भलेको होत पोच है॥
 आपनें तौ एकु अवलंबु अंब डिंभ ज्यो,
 समर्थ सीतानाथ सब संकट बिमोच है।
 तुलसीकी साहसी सराहिए कृपाल राम!
 नामकेँ भरोसेँ परिनामको निसोच है॥81॥

81. dina-dina dūnō dēkhi dāridu, dukālu, dukhu,
 duritu durāju sukha-sukṛta sakōca hai.
 māgēm painta pāvata pacāri pātakī pracaṇḍa,
 kālakī karālatā, bhalēkō hōta pōca hai..
 āpanēm tau ēku avalambu amba ḍimbha jyōm,
 samartha sītānātha saba saṅkaṭa bimōca hai.
 tulasīkī sāhasī sarāhi'ē kṛpāla rāma!
 nāmakēm bharōsēm parināmakō nisōca hai..81..

Verse no. 7/81—Seeing the multifold growth of poverty, bad times, sorrows, sins and bad governance, the (virtues of) happiness and good and noble deeds are feeling shy and hesitant. [That is, during the evil times of Kaliyug, good virtues become eclipsed under the dark shadow of evil and perversions.]

Times have become so bad that rascals get their wishes fulfilled by sheer muscle-power, but good people suffer. Just as a child has its mother as the only hope and succour so does Tulsidas have only Sri Ram as the only liberator from all the troubles that confront him. The Lord is his only all-able benefactor. Oh merciful Lord Ram! Praise the courage and faith of Tulsidas who has become free from all worries relying solely on the strength of your holy Name. [Tulsidas tells the Lord to pay special attention on him because he is totally dependent upon the Lord's holy Name in all spheres of life, and if any wrong happens to Tulsidas the Lord would not be able to wash off this ignominy and scar for all times to come.]

मोह-मद मात्यो, रात्यो कुमति-कुनारिसों,
 बिसारि बेद-लोक-लाज, आँकरो अचेतु है।
 भावे सो करत, मुँह आवै सो कहत, कछु
 काहूकी सहत नाहिँ, सरकस हेतु है॥
 तुलसी अधिक अधमाई हू अजामिलतेँ,
 ताहूमें सहाय कलि कपटनिकेतु है।
 जैबेको अनेक टेक, एक टेक हैबेकी, जो
 पेट-प्रियपूत हित रामनामु लेतु है॥82॥

82. mōha-mada mātyō, rātyō kumati-kunārisōm,
 bisāri bēda-lōka-lāja, ām̐karō acētu hai.
 bhāvē sō karata, mum̐ha āvai sō kahata, kachu

kāhūkī sahata nāhim, sarakasa hētu hai..
 tulasī adhika adhamā'ī hū ajāmilatēm,
 tāhūmēm sahāya kali kapaṭanikētu hai.
 jaibēkō anēka ṭēka, ēka ṭēka hvaibēkī, jō
 pēṭa-priyapūta hita rāmanāmu lētu hai..82..

Verse no. 7/82—'He (Tulsidas) has become arrogant due to the pride (intoxicating effects) of various possessions, is indulgent in a wife (woman) represented by ignorance, and is careless enough to neglect the sanctity and teachings of the Vedas and good society (of saints). He does what he wants (without thinking), says what comes to his mouth, and because of arrogance, does not pay heed to anyone.'

Tulsidas says that he is more evil than Ajamil, and to add to all his predicaments, 'Kali' (the personified form of Kaliyug)—who is a treasury of deceit and fraud—is his helper and assistant.

There are many paths to ruin but only one path for salvation, and it is the path of chanting the holy and divine Name of Lord Sri Ram. But Tulsidas uses it to satisfy the needs of the stomach (i.e. his hunger) by employing it to beg for food and other necessities of life.

[He means that just like Ajamil had called the Lord's name while he was actually calling his son 'Narain' at the time of death when the messengers of Yam, the god of death and hell, began to torture him, Tulsidas also chants Lord Sri Ram's holy Name just so that he can get something to eat and fulfill the needs of his mortal body. But the Lord is so merciful that though his Name is pronounced for other reasons, he still keeps the sanctity of the holy Name and provides salvation to the caller.]

Uttar Kand, Verse nos. 89-93:-

रामु बिहाइ 'मरा' जपतें बिगरी सुधरी कबिकोकिलहू की।
 नामहि तें गजकी, गनिकाकी, अजामिलकी चलि गै चलचूकी ॥
 नामप्रताप बड़ै कुसमाज बजाइ रही पति पांडुबधूकी।
 ताको भलो अजहूँ 'तुलसी' जेहि प्रीति-प्रतीति है आखर दूकी ॥ 89 ॥

89. rāmu bihā'i 'marā' japatēm bigarī sudharī kabikōkilahū kī.
 nāmahi tēm gajakī, ganikākī, ajāmilakī cali gai calacūkī..
 nāmapratāpa baṛēm kusamāja bajā'i rahī pati pāṇḍubadhūkī.
 tākō bhalō ajahūm' 'tulasī' jēhi prīti-pratīti hai ākhara dūkī..89..

Verse no. 7/89—By reciting Lord Ram's name in the reverse, the great poet Valmiki turned from a savage to a sage¹. Gaja (the Elephant)² and Ganika (the harlot/prostitute)³ got liberation/protection on the strength of Sri Ram's holy Name, and so was also the case with Ajamil⁴. Helpless Draupadi's⁵ dignity and self-respect was maintained in Duryodhan's court only on the strength of Lord's name. [This refers to an episode from the epic Mahabharat.]

Tulsidas says that those who love and devote themselves to the two syllables 'Raa' and 'Ma' of His Lord's holy Name, can have welfare, solace and succour here and now. (See also verse 88).

[The glory, the greatness, the holiness and the spiritual importance of Lord Ram's divine Name has been elaborately laid out in:-

(i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28 which appears in Section no. 1.1 of Chapter no. 1 of our present book herein above.

(ii) Vinai Patrika, verse nos. 46, 64-70 which appears as Section no. 1.6 of Chapter no. 1 of this book herein below.

This verse primarily shows how Tulsidas sees his beloved Sri Ram everywhere, in all forms and in every incarnation, and regards all the various names of God as meaning the same word 'Ram'. Here, Draupadi had prayed to Lord Sri Krishna, but for Tulsidas there is no difference between Krishna and Sri Ram. Similarly, in stanza no 2, both the Elephant and Ajamil had called 'Narayan'—one of the many names of Lord Vishnu. But Tulsidas sees his Ram there also. This also goes to prove the 'oneness' of the various forms by which the Supreme Being is known and perceived. The Absolute Truth transcends all barriers which are essentially man-made, and these artificial barriers and constraints have nothing to do with the Divinity.

¹Regarding sage Valmiki, refer to note appended to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19 in Section 1.1 of Chapter no. 1 of this book herein above.

²⁻⁴Regarding the Elephant, Ganika and Ajamil, refer to note appended to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 24 in Section 1.1 of Chapter no. 1 of this book herein above.

⁵Draupadi—The insult of Draupadi in full court was one of the main reasons why the devastating clan war of Mahabharat was fought between the Pandavas and the Kurus in the battle-field of Kurushetra. The Pandavas were five brothers, and the Kurus were a hundred. The Kurus had cheated the Pandavas in a game of dice, and after having lost everything as a wager, the unfortunate Pandavas betted their wife Draupadi, and they lost her too. Once in the open court, the Kuru king Duryodhan asked his brother Dusshaashan to disrobe her. When her Sari (a body wrapping garment worn by women in India) was being pulled out so that she could be made naked, Draupadi appealed to Lord Krishna to protect her. The Lord assumed the form of cloth. The sinful king pulled and pulled, and a huge mound of cloth gathered, but the Sari never seemed to end. In this way the dignity and self-respect of Draupadi was preserved by the Lord.]

नामु अजामिल-से खल तारन, तारन बारन-बारबधूको ।
नाम हरे प्रह्लाद-बिषाद, पिता-भय-साँसति सागरु सूको ।।
नामसों प्रीति-प्रतीति बिहीन गिल्यो कलिकाल कराल, न चूको ।
राखिहैं रामु सो जासु हिउँ तुलसी हुलसै बलु आखर दूको ।।90।।

90. nāmu ajāmila-sē khala tārana, tārana bārana-bārabadhūkō.
nāma harē prahalāda-biśāda, pitā-bhaya-sāṁsati sāgaru sūkō..
nāmasōṁ prīti-pratīti bihīna gilyō kalikāla karāla, na cūkō.
rākhihairāṁ rāmu sō jāsū hi'ēṁ tulasī hulasai balu ākhara dūkō..90..

Verse no. 7/90—The holy Name of Lord Sri Ram can salvage the evil ones like Ajamil, and liberate those like Gaja (the elephant) and the prostitute (Ganika). It was

the ‘Name’ that destroyed the sorrows of Prahalad¹, and dried up (i.e. extinguished, eliminated) the ocean of fear and torments that his father (Hiranyakashipu) subjected him to. Those who do not have faith and love for the holy Name of Sri Ram are sure to be gobbled up by the terrible Kaliyug.

Tulsidas says that those in whose heart the strength of the two letters ‘Ra’ and ‘Ma’ arises, Lord Ram would surely and steadfastly protect them.

[¹Prahalad—See note appended to Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 26 in Section 1.1 of Chapter no. 1 of this book herein above.]

जीव जहानमें जायो जहाँ, सो तहाँ, ‘तुलसी’ तिहुँ दाह दहो है।
 दोसु न काहू, कियो अपनो, सपनेहूँ नहीं सुखलेसु लहो है।
 रामके नामतैं होउ सो होउ, न सोउ हिउँ, रसना हीं कहो है।
 कियो न कछू, करिबो न कछू, कहिबो न कछू, मरिबोइ रहो है॥ 91॥

91. jīva jahānamēm jāyō jahām̐, sō tahām̐, ‘tulasī’ tihum̐ dāha dahō hai.
 dōsu na kāhū, kiyo apanō, sapanēhūm̐ nahīm̐ sukhalēsu lahō hai.
 rāmakē nāmatēm̐ hō’u sō hō’u, na sō’u hi’ēm̐, rasanā hīm̐ kahō hai.
 kiyo na kachū, karibō na kachū, kahibō na kachū, maribō’i rahō hai.. 91..

Verse no. 7/91—Tulsidas says: ‘Wherever a creature takes birth in this world, he keeps burning in the three Traitaps (Adhibhautik, Adhyatmik and Adidaivic). No one is to blame for it, for all this is the result of one’s own deeds, and this is the reason why one doesn’t find any happiness even in one’s dreams. If anything good is ever expected, it would be only due to the good (positive) effects of Lord Ram’s divine and holy Name, but the irony is that I don’t take that Name with conviction in my heart. I chant it (mechanically, superficially) only from my tongue. [That is, though one chants the Lord’s name by his tongue, his heart lacks faith and conviction. Obviously, this is like a half-hearted devotion, and the result would also be half of what is expected.]

Besides this, I have done nothing good till date, and shall not hope to do anything good in the future. I don’t have anything more to say (as a justification for my assertions and observations). Now the only thing left to do is to die (out of shame).’

[In this verse Tulsidas is admonishing others indirectly by addressing himself. He means to say that people suffer in this world inspite of apparently being doing the right things, being religious, repeating holy Mantras etc., but they are doing none of them sincerely and with honesty. They pretend to do things rightly but only till the time doing them rightly does not hurt them; they pretend to be religious because it makes them respected in society; they repeat the Mantras only to get some worldly gains and immunity from malignant stars or neutralize their negative effects. Then, even this repeating of the holy Name of the Lord is done mechanically—they are just doing it because they must do it, or because they have heard that by chanting this holy Name all their problems will be taken care of, and so on and so forth.

But this has no desired effect because they have no conviction, selfless devotion and love for the Lord; they have not submitted themselves completely to the Lord, but are repeating the Lord’s name only to serve their interests. How then can they expect the full rewards that the Lord’s holy and divine Name brings?]

जीजे न ठाउँ, न आपन गाउँ, सुरालयहू को न संबलु मेरें।
 नामुरटो, जमबास क्यों जाउँ को आइ सकै जमकिंकरु नेरें॥
 तुम्हरो सब भाँति तुम्हारिअ सौं, तुम्ह ही बलि हौ मोको ठाहरु हेरें।
 बैरख बाँह बसाइए पै तुलसी-घरु ब्याध-अजामिल-खेरें॥ 92॥

92. jījē na ṭhā'umṁ, na āpana gā'umṁ, surālayahū kō na sambalu mērēm.
 nāmuraṭō, jamabāsa kyōm jā'umṁ kō ā'i sakai jamakiṅkaru nērēm..
 tumharō saba bhāmṭi tumhāri'a saum, tumha hī bali hau mōkō ṭhāharu
 hērēm.
 bairakha bāmṭha basā'i'ē pai tulasī-gharu byādha-ajāmila-khērēm.. 92..

Verse no. 7/92—'I do not have any certainty of life. I do not have any village which I can call my own (I have no permanent abode or address), nor any arrangements to go to heaven. I have chanted Lord Ram's name, so how can I go to hell either? Which messenger of Yam can approach me in this state? [Since I have been chanting the holy Name of Ram, the messengers of Yam cannot catch hold of me].

I swear by you (Sri Ram)—by all counts, I am yours, and you are my only strength, succour and refuge. Hence, please accommodate Tulsidas in the same camp as you had done the hunter Vyadh and Ajamil, and bring me under the protection of your arms by declaring me as one of your own.'

का कियो जोगु अजामिलजू, गनिकाँ कबहीं मति पेम पगाई।
 ब्याधको साधुपनो कहिए, अपराध अगाधनि में ही जनाई॥
 करुनाकरकी करुना करुना हित, नाम-सुहेत जो देत दगाई।
 काहेको खीझिअ, रीझिअ पै, तुलसीहु सौं है, बलिसोइ सगाई॥ 93॥

93. kā kiyō jōgu ajāmilajū, ganikāmṁ kabahīm mati pēma pagā'i.
 byādhakō sādhipanō kahi'ē, aparādha agādhani mēm hī janā'i..
 karunākarakī karunā karunā hita, nāma-suhēta jō dēta dagā'i.
 kāhēkō khījhi'a, rījhi'a pai, tulasīhu sōm hai, balisō'i sagā'i.. 93..

Verse no. 7/93—'What Yoga did Ajamil do, and when did the whore (Ganika, Pingla) soak her mind in your (Sri Ram's) love and devotion? Say, tell me how saintly was the hunter (Vyadh) who was always seen committing heinous crimes. The virtues of graciousness, benevolence and magnanimity that are characteristics of Lord Sri Ram are naturally meant to be all-encompassing and all-accepting in as much as everyone can enjoy them, and no special qualities are required to benefit from them. If anyone tries to cheat you (Sri Ram) by chanting your name deceitfully (without devotion or sincerity), oh Sri Ram, why do you become angry at him (because, at least, he is chanting the purifying name, and secondly, how can he remain deceitful once he has pronounced your holy Name)? Please have mercy on him. The same rule (as described above) applies to Tulsidas as well, and he sacrifices himself upon you expecting your mercy.'

Uttar Kand, Verse no. 127:-

आरतपाल कृपाल जो रामु जेहीं सुमिरे तेहिको तहँ ठाढ़े।

नाम-प्रताप-महामहिमा अँकरे किये खोटेउ छोटेउ बाढ़े ।।
 सेवक एकतेँ एक अनेक भए तुलसी तिहुँ ताप न डाढ़े ।
 प्रेम बढौँप्रह्लादहिको, जिन पाहनतेँ परमेस्वरु काढ़े ।।127 ।।

127. āratapāla krpāla jō rāmu jēhīm sumirē tēhikō taham̐ ṭhārḥē.
 nāma-pratāpa-mahāmahimā am̐karē kiye khōṭē'u chōṭē'u bārḥē..
 sēvaka ēkatēm ēka anēka bha'e tulasī tihum̐ tāpa na ḍārḥē.
 prēma badaumprahalādahikō, jina pāhanatēm paramēsvaru kārḥē..127..

Verse no. 7/127—Lord Sri Ram is the protector of the distressed, the downtrodden and the humble creatures who have no other patron to take care of them. The Lord is a repository of mercy, compassion, kindness and benevolence. Whenever any one remembers him, he is there to help him (the caller) instantly.

The fame of the influence and effect of his holy Name is very great and far-reaching, because it transformed evil, spoilt and corrupted persons into honoured and respected ones. It made even the most humble and lowly persons very big and great.

He has had numerous devotees and followers who were all 'one better than the other' (i.e. all of them had great fame and the eclectic qualities of one excelled that of the other so much so but it was difficult to distinguish between them), and none of them suffered from the tormenting affects of the three 'Traitaps' (Adhyatmik, Adhibhautik and Adidaivik).

But (Tulsidas says that—) I pay homage and respect to the love, devotion and faith of Prahalad which enabled him to manifest the Lord from a stone pillar (in the form of a man-lion incarnation of Lord Vishnu that is known as 'Narsingh God').

Uttar Kand, Verse no. 178:-

रामनाम मातु-पितु, स्वामि समरथ, हितु,
 आस रामनामकी, भरोसो रामनामको ।
 प्रेम रामनामहीसोँ, नेम रामनामहीको,
 जानौँ नाम मरम पद दाहिनो न बामको ।।
 स्वारथ सकल परमारथको रामनाम,
 रामनाम हीन तुलसी न काहू कामको ।
 रामकी सपथ, सरबस मेरें रामनाम,
 कामधेनु-कामतरु मोसे छीन छामको ।।178 ।।

178. rāmanāma mātu-pitu, svāmi samaratha, hitu,
 āsa rāmanāmakī, bharōsō rāmanāmakō.
 prēma rāmanāmahīsōm̐, nēma rāmanāmahīkō,
 jānauṁ nāma marama pada dāhinō na bāmakō..
 svāratha sakala paramārathakō rāmanāma,
 rāmanāma hīna tulasī na kāhū kāmakō.
 rāmakī sapatha, sarabasa mērēm̐ rāmanāma,
 kāmadhēnu-kāmataru mōsē chīna chāmakō..178..

Verse no. 7/178—[In this verse, Tulsidas glorifies the holy Name of Lord Ram, an incarnate Supreme Being.]

‘Lord Sri Ram’s holy Name is like my parent, an able master, and a favourable Lord who is concerned about my good and welfare at all times.

I have all types of hopes and expectations from Lord Sri Ram’s name, and I rely only on it.

It is only Lord Sri Ram’s name that I love, and (remembrance and repetition of the holy Name is) the only routine, ritual and system of worship that I follow.

Besides Lord Sri Ram’s ‘Name’, I am unaware of any other type of favourable or unfavourable path (regarding my spiritual and worldly well-being). It is Lord Sri Ram’s Holy Name only that can help me achieve all my self-interests in this world as well as take care of my salvation (and fate after death).

[That is, I have a single path to follow, and there is no confusion in my mind as to which path from amongst the many available to select so that I can reach my destination and attain what I wish for myself.]

Tulsidas is worth nothing without Lord Sri Ram’s Holy Name. I swear and say truthfully in the Name of Lord Sri Ram—that Lord Sri Ram’s Holy Name is everything for me, and for a wretched, weak and meek person like me, it is akin to the all wish fulfilling ‘Kamdhenu cow’ and the ‘Kalpa Tree’. [This cow and the tree have a reputation that anything asked from them is given. Hence, Tulsidas says that Lord Ram’s holy Name is akin to these two entities for him.]

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(1.5) Geetawali Ramayan:

[‘Geetawali’ is another excellent book by Goswami Tulsidas that narrates the epic story of Lord Ram that is popularly known as the Ramayana in a wonderful poetic style that is called a ‘Geet’. A ‘Geet’ is a literary composition that is set to the tunes of classical music and is sung melodiously in the form of a heart-warming and mind-charming ‘song’. So ‘Geetawali’ is a rendering of the epic story of the Lord in the form of verses that are set to different tunes of Indian classical music. Even a single episode in the story is often narrated in different ways and from different angles, covering different shades of emotions, with each verse having its own dedicated style of composition.

Unlike the book ‘Kavitawali’ where an entire chapter (Uttar Kand) is dedicated to praising the glories of Lord Ram and eulogising and honouring the Lord’s holy Name, ‘Geetawali’ has only a limited number of verses that are completely and exclusively dedicated to the theme of praising and honouring Lord Ram’s holy Name, and the ones that are there are intricately woven into the fabric of the text itself, forming an integral part of the flow of the narrative in general.

Here, for the purpose of our Book we shall select only those verses that are relevant to its theme, which is to underline and extol the glories of Lord Ram’s divine and holy Name. We find such verses in Chapter no. 5, called Sundar Kand, of Geetawali.

So we shall now read verse nos. 40, 42, 44-46 of Geetawali’s Sundar Kand herein below:-

Sundar Kand, verse no. 40:

कहो, क्यों न बिभीषनकी बनै ?
 गयो छाडि छल सरन रामकी, जो फल चारि चार्यौ जनै ॥ 1 ॥
 मंगलमूल प्रनाम जासु जग, मूल अमंगलके खनै ।
 तेहि रघुनाथ हाथ माथे दियो, को ताकी महिमा भनै ? ॥ 2 ॥
 नाम—प्रताप पतितपावन किए, जे न अघाने अघ अनै ।
 कोउ उलटो, कोउ सूधो जपि भए राजहंस बायस—तनै ॥ 3 ॥
 हुतो ललात कृसगात खात खरि, मोद पाइ कोदो—कनै ।
 सो तुलसी चातक भयो जाचत राम स्यामसुंदर घनै ॥ 4 ॥

kahō, kyōm na bibhīṣanakī banai?

gayō chāḍi chala sarana rāmakī, jō phala cāri cāryauṁ janai.. 1..
 maṅgalamūla pranāma jāsu jaga, mūla amaṅgalakē khanai.
 tēhi raghunātha hātha māthē diyō, kō tākī mahimā bhanai?.. 2..
 nāma-pratāpa patitapāvana ki'ē, jē na aghānē agha anai.
 kō'u ulaṭō, kō'u sūdhō japi bha'ē rājahansa bāyasa-tanai.. 3..
 hutō lalāta kṛṣagāta khāta khari, mōda pā'i kōdō-kanai.
 sō tulasī cātaka bhayō jācata rāma syāmasuṁdara ghanai.. 4..

Verse no. 5/40—Say, why should Vibhishan* not be rewarded (or be treated as being most fortunate and lucky)? For, after forsaking all trickery, deception, pretension, cheating and stratagem, he had come to seek refuge with and shelter of Lord Sri Ram who gives all the four types of celebrated fruits to all the four types of devotees¹ (1).

[*Vibhishan was the younger brother of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. He was publicly humiliated and kicked out of Lanka by Ravana when he tried to convince the latter to make a truce with Lord Ram by returning the Lord's wife Sita to him, and avoid a destruction of the entire demon race. This wise advice however did not go down well with Ravana as he thought Vibhishan was a traitor and taking the side of his enemy, Lord Ram. Vibhishan left Lanka and came to take shelter with Lord Ram, and of course he was warmly welcome. The Lord honoured him with a promise that at the end of the war he would be made the king of Lanka. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.

¹The 4 types of fruits are—“Artha” = wealth, prosperity; “Dharma” = virtues of righteousness, probity, propriety; “Kaam” = fulfilled of all desires; and “Moksha” = emancipation, salvation, liberation and deliverance from the shackles of this mundane, delusory world.

The 4 types of devotees are as follows— (a) “Aarta” = one who worships the Lord to get rid of their sorrows, miseries, agonies, troubles and tribulations; (b) “Artharthi” = those who worship the Lord for material gain, wealth, prosperity etc.; (c) “Jigyaasu” = those who worship the Lord in order to seek Him, or find out about His true nature, the Supreme Truth, the essence of existence etc.; and (d) “Gyani” = those who have realised Him, and worship Him selflessly. They are also aware of the true nature of the soul.]

Doing ‘Pranam’ (i.e. paying obeisance by bowing the head) to Lord Sri Ram is the root of all auspiciousness and well-beings, and is potent enough to uproot all inauspiciousness and evil forebodings in this world. Verily, it is the same Raghunath

(Sri Ram) who had placed his benevolent and merciful hands on the head of Vibhishan. Say, how can one describe his (Vibhishan's) privilege and good luck, and the resultant fame that he acquired for himself? (2).

The power and might of the Lord's holy Name has purified even those sinners and vile ones who were never tired of doing evil, sinning and committing misdemeanours and unrighteousness of all kinds. Some had chanted his name in the correct order, and others in the reverse order (i.e. some as RAAM and some as MARAA)², and by doing so, even those whose characters and deeds were like crows became as exalted as royal swans (3).

[²This refers to the legendary sage Valmiki who had attained an exalted stature of being one of the greatest sages and seers of his time by using Lord Ram's holy Name in the reverse order to do meditation. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19.]

[Talking about himself, Tulsidas says—] 'He, who was of a weak body (i.e. under-nourished, emaciated) and had to eat husk (i.e. eat worthless, left-over food), who yearned for bits and morsels of food, and had to content himself with ordinary food and felt happy even to get it (in short, who was extremely impoverished and hungry to even find sufficient to feed his stomach)—now is so privileged that he is able to directly ask or seek like a Papiha (a sparrow hawk) from the beautiful dark cloud representing Lord Sri Ram³ (4).

[³Tulsidas cites his early life when he was so poor that he had to beg for food, but no one cared for him. Now that he has declared himself as a servant and devotee of the Lord, everyone around wishes to please him and get his blessings, and therefore there is no dearth of anything that he needs. All this is because of one factor: that is his surrendering before Lord Ram.

Realizing the import of this, Tulsidas has decided not to seek from anybody other than his Lord Ram who is compared here to the dark rain-bearing clouds. The cloud is symbolic of magnanimity, generosity and charity, and used as a metaphor for life and its abundant pleasures and joys. The cloud showers rain which sustains life on this earth so much so that when it rains and the dark cloud is cited in the sky, the farmer rejoices and the animals begin to sing in the garden and the forests. The 'Papiha' asks for rain-drops from the cloud to satisfy its own thirst, but the gracious and kind cloud gives rain not only to him, but at his behest or on his excuse, to the whole world at large.

Similarly, Tulsidas asks from Lord Sri Ram for his own benefit, but the magnanimous Lord showers his grace and munificence on the whole creation. Tulsidas rejoices at the Lord's grace and benevolent nature.]

Sundar Kand, verse no. 42:

गये राम सरन सबकौ भलो ।
 गनी-गरीब, बड़ो-छोटो, बुध-मूढ़, हीनबल-अतिबलो ॥ 1 ॥
 पंगु-अंध, निरगुनी-निसंबल, जो न लहै जाचे जलो ।
 सो निबह्यो नीके, जो जनमि जग राम-राजमारग चलो ॥ 2 ॥
 नाम-प्रताप-दिवाकर कर खर गरत तुहिन ज्यों कलिमलो ।
 सुतहित नाम लेत भवनिधि तरि गयो अजामिल-सो खलो ॥ 3 ॥

प्रभुपद प्रेम प्रनाम—कामतरु सद्य बिभीषनको फलो ।
तुलसी सुमिरत नाम सबनिको मंगलमय नभ—जल थलो ॥ 4 ॥

gayē rāma sarana sabakau bhalō.
ganī-garība, baṛō-chōṭō, budha-mūrha, hīnabala-atibalō.. 1..
paṅgu-andha, niragunī-nisambala, jō na lahai jācē jalō.
sō nibahyō nīkē, jō janami jaga rāma-rājamāraga calō.. 2..
nāma-pratāpa-divākara kara khara garata tuhina jyōm kalimalō.
sutahita nāma lēta bhavanidhi tari gayō ajāmila-sō khalō.. 3..
prabhupada prēma pranāma-kāmataru sadya bibhīṣanakō phalō.
tulasī sumirata nāma sabanikō maṅgalamaya nabha-jala thalō.. 4..

Verse no. 5/42—Everyone stands to gain and have welfare by seeking refuge in the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram—whether he is rich or impoverished, whether he is of high or low birth, of whatever stature and position in society he is, whether he is wise or an idiot, and whether he is weak or most strong and valiant (1).

Even those who are lame, blind, without any virtues and qualities, and most impoverished and wretched, who do not even get water to drink when desired—if they took birth in this world and followed the highway that leads to Lord Ram (i.e. the path of devotion, worship, adoration, love, affection, surrender, submission and service etc.), they were well looked after and sustained by the Lord (2).

In the face of the brilliant and splendorous rays of the sun representing the might, glory, fame and virtues of Sri Ram's Holy Name, the faults (i.e. evils, vices, misdemeanours, sins etc.) of Kaliyug melt away like snow.

Even the wicked rascal such as Ajaamil crossed the ocean of this illusionary and mundane world, and attained emancipation and salvation just by calling out his name (“Narayan”), even though he had meant to call out to his son of the same name¹ (3).

[¹Ajaamil was so horrified at seeing the messengers of death that he called for his own son, named Narain, to protect him. But since the word also was the name of Vishnu, the latter immediately sent his own messengers to rescue the wretched Ajaamil and bring him to heaven.]

The bowing of his head by Vibhishan (to pay obeisance to Lord Ram) proved to be a Kalpa Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree) for him, and it bore fruits for him immediately too².

Tulsidas cites this as an example to say that similarly, when one recalls or remembers the Lord's Holy Name, the sky, the earth (land) and the water (rivers, oceans etc.) all become auspicious and full of good omens for him (4).

[²Vibhishan was subjected to great humiliation in Lanka by his own brother Ravana who treated him with great contempt because Vibhishan was a stout follower of Lord Vishnu. But when Vibhishan came and took the shelter of Lord Ram, he was not only warmly welcomed but also given respect and a position in the hierarchy of Lord's ministers. Not only this, his honour was restored as the Lord anointed him as the next king of Lanka.]

Sundar Kand, verse no. 44:

दीन-हित बिरद पुराननि गायो ।
 आरत-बंधु, कृपालु, मृदुल-चित जानि सरन हौं आयो ॥ 1 ॥
 तुम्हरे रिपुको अनुज बिभीषन, बंस निसाचर जायो ।
 सुनि गुन-सील-सुभाउ नाथको मैं चरननि चितु लायो ॥ 2 ॥
 जानत प्रभु दुख-सुख दासनिको, तातें कहि न सुनायो ।
 करि करुना भरि नयन बिलोकहु, तब जानौं अपनायो ॥ 3 ॥
 बचन बिनीत सुनत रघुनायक हँसि करि निकट बुलायो ।
 भेंट्यो हरि भरि अंक भरत-ज्यों, लंकापति मन भायो ॥ 4 ॥
 करपंकज सिर परसि अभय कियो, जनपर हेतु दिखायो ।
 तुलसिदास रघुबीर भजन करि को न परमपद पायो ? ॥ 5 ॥

dīna-hita birada purānani gāyō.

ārata-bandhu, kṛpālu, mṛdula-cita jāni sarana haum āyō.. 1..
 tumharē ripukō anuja bibhiṣana, bansa nisācara jāyō.
 suni guna-sīla-subhā'u nāthakō maiṁ caranani citu lāyō.. 2..
 jānata prabhu dukha-sukha dāsanikō, tātēṁ kahi na sunāyō.
 kari karunā bhari nayana bilōkahu, taba jānaum apanāyō.. 3..
 bacana binīta sunata raghunāyaka haṁṣi kari nikaṭa bulāyō.
 bhēṅṭyō hari bhari aṅka bharata-jyōṁ, laṅkāpati mana bhāyō.. 4..
 karapaṅkaja sira parasi abhaya kiyō, janapara hētu dikhāyō.
 tulasidāsa raghubīra bhajana kari kō na paramapada pāyō?.. 5..

Verse no. 5/44—[Vibhishan pleads with Lord Ram—] ‘Oh Lord! The Purans (ancient histories of the Hindus) have sung your glories (i.e. made you renowned) as being one who is the well-wisher and benefactor of the meek, weak, lowly, humble, wretched and downtrodden, the underdogs and the miserable ones (dīna-hita birada purānani gāyō).

I too have come to seek your refuge and shelter, recognising you as a friend of the lowly, the humble and the distressed, as being merciful, compassionate and gracious, and of being a sweet, amiable and friendly temperament (ārata-bandhu, kṛpālu, mṛdula-cita) (1).

I am born in the demon clan and am a younger brother of your arch enemy Ravana. Hearing your virtues, noble characters and merciful temperament, I have concentrated my mind in your holy feet (with the hope that you will bless me and be compassionate towards me) (2).

The Lord is aware of the joys and sorrows of those who serve him faithfully, with devotion and sincerity (i.e. the Lord knows the pain and sufferings as well as joys and happiness of all his devotees, followers and subordinates—because he is omniscient and resides in the heart of all as their soul). This is the reason why I have not told you anything; I did not mention in detail about my sufferings and agonies.

Now, only when you intently look at me with merciful, loving and compassionate eyes will I know that you have accepted me (as one of your own, as

your devotee whom you have given refuge and shelter—*taba jānaum̐ apanāyō* (3).’

Hearing such prayerful words of earnest pleadings spoken by Vibhishan, Raghunayak (i.e. the Lord of king Raghu’s race; Lord Sri Ram) laughed (i.e. smiled politely) and called him near, embraced him, and held him close to his bosom as if he were his own brother Bharat¹, and regarded him as a king of Lanka for all practical purposes² (4).

[¹Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/36, stanza no. 2; verse no. 5/43, stanza no. 4.

²Refer: Geetawali, Sundar Kand, verse no. 5/38, stanza no. 3; verse no. 5/43, stanza no. 4.]

Then, touching his (Vibhishan's) head with his lotus-like hands (i.e. palms), the Lord made him fearless—this is how Lord Ram exhibited his affection for his devotee (and faithful, loyal follower)³.

Tulsidas observes that indeed, who has not attained the most exalted and the supreme state (or status) of existence⁴ by worshipping and having devotion for Lord Sri Ram? (5).

[³To wit, the Lord not only elevated Vibhishan to the high stature of being equivalent to his own beloved brother Bharat, embracing him with the same affection as he would have embraced Bharat, but also made him the king of Lanka, and to top it he blessed Vibhishan by putting his hands on his head as a gesture of providing him fearlessness and abiding protection from his side.

⁴The ‘supreme post or stature’ for Vibhishan here has different connotations—in the material world it is the kingship of Lanka and freedom from Ravana's fear. In the spiritual realm it is to be blessed by the divine sight and blessing of the Lord, be recognised as his devotee, and attain the chance to serve his holy feet. And in the highest realm of metaphysics it is the oneness with the Supreme Soul. Frankly speaking, without any prejudice and interpolating with the context, this third state was attained by Ravana and Kumbhakarn but not by Vibhishan.

During the final battle, a bright shaft of effulgence representing the life-force or Soul had emerged from their bodies and merged with Sri Ram (Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 9 that precedes Doha no. 103, and Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 71 respectively), but this privilege was denied to Vibhishan, albeit it is true that a devotee prefers to eternally serve the holy feet of the Lord, but the ultimate peace and bliss is attained only when the microcosmic soul merges with the macrocosmic Soul that is an eternal ocean of bliss—this stature both Ravana and Kumbhakarn achieved, but Vibhishan missed!]

Sundar Kand, verse no. 45:

सत्य कहौं मेरो सहज सुभाउ ।
 सुनहु सखा कपिपति लंकापति, तुम्ह सन कौन दुराउ ॥ 1 ॥
 सब बिधि हीन-दीन, अति जड़मति जाको कतहुँ न ठाउँ ।
 आयो सरन भजौं, न तजौं तिहि, यह जानत रिषिराउ ॥ 2 ॥
 जिन्हके हौं हित सब प्रकार चित, नाहिन और उपाउ ।
 तिन्हहिं लागि धरि देह करौं सब, डरौं न सुजस नसाउ ॥ 3 ॥

पुनि पुनि भुजा उठाइ कहत हौं, सकल सभा पतिआउ ।
 नहि कोऊ प्रिय मोहि दास सम, कपट—प्रीति बहि जाउ ॥ 4 ॥
 सुनि रघुपति बचन बिभीषन प्रेम—मगन, मन चाउ ।
 तुलसिदास तजि आस—त्रास सब ऐसे प्रभु कहँ गाउ ॥ 5 ॥

satya kahauṁ mērō sahaja subhā'u.

sunahu sakhā kapipati laṅkāpati, tumha sana kauna durā'u.. 1..

saba bidhi hīna-dīna, ati jaṛamati jākō katahum' na ṭhā'um'.

āyō sarana bhajauṁ, na tajaum' tihi, yaha jānata riṣirā'u.. 2..

jinhakē hauṁ hita saba prakāra cita, nāhina aura upā'u.

tinahaiṁ lāgi dhari dēha karauṁ saba, ḍarauṁ na sujasa nasā'u.. 3..

puni puni bhuja uṭhā'i kahata hauṁ, sakala sabhā pati'ā'u.

nahi kō'ū priya mōhi dāsa sama, kapaṭa-prīti bahi jā'u.. 4..

suni raghupati bacana bibhīṣana prēma-magana, mana cā'u.

tulasidāsa taji āsa-trāsa saba aisē prabhu kaham' gā'u.. 5..

Verse no. 5/45—[After giving refuge and shelter to Vibhishan, Lord Ram made his basic kind and merciful nature known to the assembly. Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Doha no. 48 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it where the same declaration has been made by Lord Ram.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 85—to Doha no. 87 where Lord Ram has preached the saintly crow Kaagbhusund on the same theme; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 36—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 42 where Lord Ram has preached to Hanuman and Bharat and the rest of the company about the characters of saintly people who are dear to him; and (iii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 47 where Lord Ram has preached the citizens of Ayodhya about the characters of people who are dear to him.

If one understands the import of these teachings, one is motivated to improve one's self and inculcate these virtues that would make him feel very comfortable and assured of redemption at the hands of Lord Ram. It also motivates one to surrender himself fearlessly before the Lord who is none but the Supreme Being in a visible human form, a prospect that makes seeking deliverance and salvation so much the easier as compared to worshipping a God who is unknown and unseen.]

[Lord Sri Ram proclaimed—] 'I speak truthfully about my inherent and natural temperament. Listen attentively, the king of monkeys (Sugriv) and the king of Lanka (Vibhishan). There is nothing which I have to conceal from you (1).

He—who is lowly, downtrodden, meek, humble, most foolish and highly unfortunate, one who has no where to go and has no destination, one who has no succour and solace anywhere in this world—if any such person comes to me seeking shelter and refuge, I 'serve' him in all possible ways, and never abandon, avoid or forsake him. This fact is well known to (and endorsed by) sage Valmiki and other exalted sages and seers (2).

Those whose mind and intellect regard me as their sole benefactor, their only protector, and their single well-wisher, and who find no solution (or way out) of their problems except seeking my refuge (i.e. they are in a virtual log-jam in this mundane

world but sincerely seek a way out of their quandry)—I assume a human form for them and finish off all their works for them, not bothering (or fearing) that by doing any such act my reputation and fame will be harmed or tainted in any way¹ (3).

[¹To wit, I am not tardy and reluctant at helping my devotees, even at the cost of tarnishing my immaculate image or reputation. Sri Ram seems to justify his many acts that would seem a little bit unrighteous on their face. But since those acts would be of good of his devotees, the Lord did not hesitate to do them. For instance, his acceptance of Vibhishan would seem as a strategic military move to spark dissention and desertion in the enemy's camp, as well as to give shelter to such deserters and traitors to serve strategic gains on the battle field and get insider information on the enemy's army and preparedness. But the Lord did not accept Vibhishan for this reason; the Lord accepted him as he was subjected to immense torment and was suffering horrors under the rule of his cruel and selfish demon brother Ravana who did not know what good treatment to his dependants meant.

Think what would be the fate of Vibhishan if Lord Ram had turned him away for fear of inviting ill-fame in the world for giving refuge to traitors such as Vibhishan? The latter would have surely been tortured to death by Ravana. Since Vibhishan came to seek help from the Lord when he was in immense consternation and fear of his life, it was incumbent upon the Lord to extend his protection to him because it his declared policy to give protection to all who come to seek it, and especially when Vibhishan was not in the wrong and was a pious soul. The Lord just could not refuse him.

Similar accusation can be made with respect of Lord Ram dethroning Baali and putting Sugriv on the throne of Kiskindha—because then Sugriv would be obliged to the Lord and be under his command, almost like his vassal, providing the much needed army and arms for the campaign of Lanka. In this case, Lord Ram was more concerned for the good and welfare of Sugriv who had been wronged by his brother Baali. If mere help of the monkey army was the Lord's concern in making Sugriv the king of Kishkindha, the same objective could have been more easily achieved by seeking the help of Baali if Lord Ram would have helped the latter in capturing Sugriv. But the Lord preferred to accept the ignominy of taking sides in what was a mutual conflict between two brothers as it helped Sugriv to regain his honour and rightful share.

Earlier also, Lord Ram had liberated Ahilya, the wife of sage Guatam who was in the form of a stone, by 'touching her with his feet', something which is not totally beyond reproach as it is not right to touch a woman, especially if is she is a sage's wife. But since this seemingly not-so-right action was necessary for the good of Ahilya, the Lord did it, fully knowing that the coming generation would continue to raise fingers at him for this kind act.]

I repeatedly lift my arms and declare, let the whole assembly listen carefully to it and believe my words—no one is dearer to me than my servant (i.e. my ardent devotee, humble follower, refuge seeker). But yes, that servant should be of pure intellect, pure mind and pure heart, uncorrupt, truthful, honest, free from deceit and conceit, and of pure disposition in all possible ways² (4).'

[²To wit, the Lord does not accept rascals and pretenders who wish to escape judgement by taking the garb of a devotee of the Lord for the time till he can hide himself from punishment, only to rear his ugly head and go back to his old evil ways once the danger of punishment is over. For in all sooth, this is not allowed; the Lord makes it clear here when he says that he abhors deception, pretensions, conceit,

deceit, or cunning of any kind. If one wishes the Lord to help him or her, then he or she has to first clean the heart and mind before expecting anything from the Lord.

Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-5 that precede Doha no. 44; and (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 48.]

Hearing these words of Raghupati (Sri Ram), Vibhishan was overwhelmed with waves of surging affections and emotions of endearment for the gracious Lord, while his heart and mind were greatly encouraged and enthused by the Lord's solemn oath. Tulsidas advises that one should avoid or abandon all hopes of succour and solace from this world, and become fearless by taking refuge with Lord Ram. One should sing the glories, the virtues and the fames of such a (munificent, benevolent, merciful, compassionate, gracious, benign, magnanimous and kind) Lord as Sri Ram! (5).

Sundar Kand, verse no. 46:

नाहिन भजिबे जोग बियो ।
 श्रीरघुबीर समान आन को पूरन-कृपा-हियो ॥ १ ॥
 कहहु, कौन सुर सिला तारि पुनि केवट मीत कियो ?
 कौने गीध अधमको पितु-ज्यों निज कर पिंड दियो ? ॥ २ ॥
 कौन देव सबरीके फल करि भोजन सलिल पियो ?
 बालित्रास-बारिधि बूडत कपि केहि गहि बाँह लियो ? ॥ ३ ॥
 भजन-प्रभाउ बिभीषन भाष्यौ, सुनि कपि-कटक जियो ।
 तुलसिदासको प्रभु कोसलपति सब प्रकार बरियो ॥ ४ ॥

nāhina bhajibē jōga biyō.

śrīraghubīra samāna āna kō pūrana-krpā-hiyō.. 1..
 kahahu, kauna sura silā tāri puni kēvaṭa mīta kiyō?
 kaunē gīdha adhamakō pitu-jyōm nija kara piṇḍa diyō?.. 2..
 kauna dēva sabarīkē phala kari bhōjana salila piyō?
 bālitrāsa-bāridhi būṛata kapi kēhi gahi bām̐ha liyō?.. 3..
 bhajana-prabhā'u bibhīṣana bhāṣyau, suni kapi-kaṭaka jiyō.
 tulasidāsakō prabhu kōsalapati saba prakāra bariyō.. 4..

Verse no. 5/46—[When Vibhishan heard Lord Ram make a solemn promise as described in verse no. 5/45 above, he praised the Lord in the following way—]

‘There is no one else more worthy to be worshipped, adored and have devotion for than Lord Sri Ram.

Forsooth, whose heart is as full with mercy, grace, munificence and kindness as that of Lord Sri Ram? (1).

Say, which other Lord God (sura)¹ has liberated the rock (“Ahilya”, from her curse that turned her into a stone)² and made Kewat (the boatman) his friend³? And who has offered ‘Pinda’ (a round ball-shaped offering given to dead ancestors, especially parents, as a part of funeral rites) to the most sinful and lowly vulture (Jatau)⁴ with his own hands as if he was the Lord's father? (2).

[¹The word used in the text is “sura”, meaning ‘a God’. Vibhishan clearly hints that such divine intercessions and the privilege of granting of boons fall under

the realm of Gods. They are expected to lift the downtrodden and the lowly so that their souls can find peace and happiness. But none bothered to pay attention to any of the three mentioned here; none tried to do something for their liberation and deliverance even though they were pious and led a righteous life. Vibhishan uses this opportunity to praise Lord Ram, saying that it was he who took pains to walk upto them and saw that they got what they wanted.

To wit, Ahilya was freed from her curse that had turned her into a stone. Kewat got the promise of deliverance at the time of his death and a permanent friendship with the king of his realm, i.e. Lord Ram. And Jatau too got deliverance though he was a vulture by birth, a birth that is not holy and high by any count.

²Refer to Section no. 1.1 of Chapter no. 1 of this Book where this story of Ahilya is briefly narrated as a note appended to Ram Charit Manas, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 24.

³Kewat, the boatman, had taken Lord Ram, his wife Sita and his brother Laxman across the river when they were on their way to the forest from Ayodhya. He was of a low caste and had done no meritorious deed in life that could help him attain deliverance upon death. But his meeting with Lord Ram proved to a great boon for him and his entire family as the Lord granted all of them final liberation and deliverance.

⁴Refer to Section no. 1.1 of Chapter no. 1 of this Book where this story of the vulture Jatau is briefly narrated as a note appended to Ram Charit Manas, Doha no. 24.]

Which God has eaten the fruits offered by Sabari⁵ and drank water at her place (because she was of a low caste and castracised by society)? And who has taken out Sugriv⁶ by grasping his arms and prevented him from drowning in the ocean of grief and fear caused by (his elder brother and arch rival) Baali? (3).’

[⁵Refer to Section no. 1.1 of Chapter no. 1 of this Book where this story of the Sabari is briefly narrated as a note appended to Ram Charit Manas, Doha no. 24.

⁶Refer to Section no. 1.1 of Chapter no. 1 of this Book where this story of the Sugriv is briefly narrated as a note appended to Ram Charit Manas, Doha no. 24.]

When Vibhishan praised the Lord as aforesaid, highlighting the potential powers of devotion and worship of the Lord and the benefits that accrue from them (by citing the above examples), the whole army of monkeys⁷ heard these words in rapt attention, and discussed it amongst themselves most cheerfully and animatedly.

Really, the Lord of Tulsidas (*tulasidāsakō prabhu*), the King of Kaushal (Ayodhya), Lord Sri Ram, is indeed the ‘best’ (the most exalted, supreme and one of his kind) in all possible ways (*kōsalapati saba prakāra bariyō*) (4).

[⁷The fact that the words of Vibhishan made the monkey army become alert, vigilant, animated, cheerful and joyous is significant. Prior to this sermon by Vibhishan, the monkeys had their doubts. But now they were convinced that their Lord was no ordinary prince, and his super-human powers are no less than divine than the Gods. Nay, the Lord is much more compassionate and graceful than even the Gods whom the world pay its obeisance, for the Lord pays attention for the welfare and happiness of all his dependants as compared to the Gods who are only interested in accepting offerings.

This discourse of Vibhishan was a great morale booster for the entire army and ensured that they fought with surety of victory in the up-coming war. They thought that if the enemy’s brother is praising the Lord so much, then surely there must be

truth in it. Besides his own case that needed to be praised, Vibhishan has also cited so many other independent examples to stress the truth of what he says. In all probabilities, many in the ranks of the monkey and bear army may not have known of these events. This definitely helped them to overcome their doubts, dilemmas and uncertainties, and infused them with renewed vigour, enthusiasm and zeal to serve the Lord in the best way they can, both individually as well as together as a group, attitudes which are essential to win a war. It was a dose of great morale booster for the army.]

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(1.6) Vinai Patrika:

['Vinai Patrika' of Goswami Tulsidas is an exemplarily excellent and a nonesuch Book of Prayers which has ever been written in Indian literature. It is one of the most celebrated, most highly revered, and widely acclaimed and glorified Book of Prayers dedicated to Lord Ram that has found no match anywhere.

Vinai Patrika is richly endowed with a wide range of verses that extol and glorify the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram. Like Geetawali and Kavitaawali, the verses of Vinai Patrika are set to different soulful Ragas (tunes) of classical Indian music, making it possible to sing them to give peace and happiness to the heart and the soul.

Now therefore, we shall select and read an assortment of such beautiful verses herein below, and derive spiritual joy by reading and understanding their message.

Rāga Rāmakālī

(46)

सदा

राम जपु, राम जपु, राम जपु, राम जपु, राम जपु, मूढ मन, बार बार ।
 सकल सौभाग्य-सुख-खानि जिय जानि शठ, मानि विश्वास वद वेदसारं ।।1।।
 कोशलेन्द्र नव-नीलकंजाभतनु, मदन-रिपु-कंजहृदि-चंचरीकं ।
 जानकीरवन सुखभवन भुवनैकप्रभु, समर-भंजन, परम कारुणीकं ।।2।।
 दनुज-वन-धूमधुज, पीन आजानुभुज, दंड-कोदंडवर चंड बानं ।
 अरुण कर चरण मुख नयन राजीव, गुन-अयन, बहु मयन-शोभा-निधानं ।।3।।
 वासनावृंद-कैरव-दिवाकर, काम-क्रोध-मद-कंज-कानन-तुषारं ।
 लोभ अति मत्त नागेंद्र पंचाननं भक्तहित हरण संसार-भारं ।।4।।
 केशवं, क्लेशहं, केश-वंदित पद-द्वंद्व मंदाकिनी-मूलभूतं ।
 सर्वदानंद-संदोह, मोहापहं, घोर-संसार-पाथोधि-पोतं ।।5।।
 शोक-संदेह-पाथोदपटलानिलं, पाप-पर्वत-कठिन-कुलिशरूपं ।
 संतजन-कामधुक-धेनु, विश्रामप्रद, नाम कलि-कलुष-भंजन अनूपं ।।6।।

धर्म—कल्पद्रुमाराम, हरिधाम—पथि संबलं, मूलमिदमेव एकं ।
 भक्ति—वैराग्य—विज्ञान—शम—दान—दम, नाम आधीन साधन अनेकं ॥७॥
 तेन तप्तं, हुतं, दत्तेवाखिलं, तेन सर्वं कृतं कर्मजालं ।
 येन श्रीरामनामामृतं पानकृतमनिशमनवद्यमवलोक्य कालं ॥८॥
 श्वपच, खल, भिल्ल, यवनादिहरिलोकगत, नामबल विपुल मति मल न परसी ।
 त्यागि सब आस, संत्रास, भवपास, असि निसित हरिनाम जपु दासतुलसी ॥९॥

(46)

sadā

rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu, mūr̥ha mana, bāra
 bāraṁ.

sakala saubhāgya-sukha-khāni jiya jāni śaṭha, māni viśvāsa vada vēdasāraṁ.

1.

kōśalēndra nava-nīlakanjābhatanu, madana-ripu-kanjāhṛdi-cañcarikaṁ.

jānakīravana sukhabhavana bhuvanaikaprabhu, samara-bhanjana, parama
 kārunikaṁ. 2.

danuja-vana-dhūmadhuja, pīna ājānubhuja, daṇḍa-kōdaṇḍavara caṇḍa
 bānaṁ.

aruṇa kara caraṇa mukha nayana rājīva, guna-ayana, bahu mayana-śōbhā-
 nidhānaṁ. 3.

vāsanāvṛnda-kairava-divākara, kāma-krōdha-mada-kanja-kānana-tuṣāraṁ.

lōbha ati matta nāgēndra pañcānanam bhaktahita haraṇa sansāra-bhāraṁ. 4.

kēśavam, klēśaṁ, kēśa-vandita pada-dvandva mandākinī-mūlabhūtaṁ.

sarvadānanda-sandōha, mōhāpahaṁ, ghōra-sansāra-pāthōdhi-pōtaṁ. 5.

śōka-sandēha-pāthōdapaṭālānilam, pāpa-parvata-kaṭhina-kuliśarūpaṁ.

santajana-kāmadhuka-dhēnu, viśrāmaprada, nāma kali-kaluṣa-bhanjana
 anūpaṁ. 6.

dharma-kalpadrumārāma, haridhāma-pathi sambalam, mūlamidamēva ēkaṁ.

bhakti-vairāgya-vijñāna-śama-dāna-dama, nāma ādhīna sādhana anēkaṁ. 7.

tēna taptam, hutam, dattmēvākhilam, tēna sarvam kṛtam karmajālam.

yēna śrīrāmanāmāmṛtam pānakṛtamanīśamanavadyamavalōkya kālam. 8.

śvapaca, khala, bhilla, yavanādiharilōkagata, nāmabala vipula mati mala na
 parasī.

tyāgi saba āsa, santrāsa, bhavapāsa, asi nisita harināma japu dāsatulasī. 9.

Verse no. 46—Oh you foolish mind! Always chant and keep repeating Lord Ram's holy and divine Name 'RAM' persistently, consistently, unwaveringly and constantly at all times because it is the mine and treasure-trove of all good fortunes, auspiciousness, happiness and joy. This is what the Vedas have reiterated and is the essence of their teachings. [Realizing this fact in your heart, and having full belief, faith and conviction in it, you should always pronounce Lord Ram's holy Name.] (1).

The charm and radiance of the beauteous form of Kaushalendra (literally the King of Kaushal, here meaning Lord Ram) is like a newly bloomed blue lotus flower. He is a bee that dwells in the lotus-like heart of the Lord who is an enemy of Kamdeo. [This refers to Lord Shiva who had turned Kamdeo to ashes.] He stays with Janki (i.e. is the

constant companion of Sita, as he is her divine husband). He is an abode of bliss, happiness and joys. He is the only Lord of the entire universe. He is a destroyer of enemies in the battle-field. And he is most merciful, kind and compassionate. (2).

He (Lord Ram) is like a wild fire for the forest of demons. [That is, just like the fire destroys big forests, Lord Ram is able to get rid of great demons who stand for evil, dark, decadent, pervert and corrupt tendencies in this world, as well as equally evil thoughts, actions and behaviours.] He holds a beautiful bow and fierce (invincible) arrows in his muscular arms that are so long as to reach the knees. His hands (palms), feet (sole), face and eyes are attractive and alluring like a red lotus. He is an abode of all good virtues and a treasury of beauty that is comparable to numerous Kamdeos taken together. (3).

He is like the sun personified for the purpose of abolishing the negative qualities of Vasanas (worldly yearning, lust and passion for the objects of the senses) symbolized by the Kumudini (a type of lotus that shrinks in sunlight). Similarly, he is like frost for the purpose of destroying the forest of lotuses symbolizing such negative qualities as Kaam (lust, desire, passion, infatuation and lasciviousness), Krodh (anger), Mada (haughtiness, arrogance), etc. He is like a lion, the king of forest, for the wild and arrogant elephant representing Lobh (greed, avarice, rapacity). He is the slayer of demons for the benefit of his devotees, as well as to remove the burden of the entire world tyrannized by these demons (symbolizing evils and vices; those rascals who are universal tormentors of innocent creatures; those who are miscreants who are sinful, unrighteous, unscrupulous, and pervert). (4).

His name is Keshav, and he is the destroyer or eliminator of troubles, tribulations, sorrows and agonies of all sorts. His feet, which are the fount (spring) from where river Ganges had emerged, is worshipped by Lords Brahma (the creator) and Shiva (the annihilator). He is always a bouquet (a treasury) of Anand (bliss, happiness and joy). He is an eliminator of all forms of Moha (attachments, attractions, infatuations and delusions). And he is like a ship to cross the great ocean known as Bhav-Sagar (literally the mortal world of mundane existence that is huge and endless, as well as entrapping for the creature). (5).

Lord Ram is like a strong gust of wind to disperse clouds of sorrows and doubts. He is like a Vajra (thunderbolt; the strong weapon of Indra) for the purpose of reducing to rubble the formidable mountain of sins. His name gives the desired fruits to saints like a Kamdhenu cow does. He is a bestower of bliss, beatitude and felicity. And he is matchless in eliminating all the great sins that are characteristic of Kaliyug. (6).

The holy Name of Lord Ram is a like an evergreen garden of Kalpa Trees representing Dharma (auspiciousness, righteousness, virtuousness). It is like the sanctified meal that is to be accepted by the travelers who are en-route to the abode of the Lord. [That is, the holy Name of Lord Ram sustains spiritual seekers of emancipation and salvation; it is the mainstay of those who want liberation and deliverance from this gross delusory world.]

It is the fount as well as the foundation of all resources and accomplishments. [That is, the holy Name of the Lord is the only means by which one can attain success in any kind of endeavour in this world. All achievements revolve around one's devotion for the Lord and his reliance on his holy Name.]

The various means of salvation—such as Bhakti (devotion), Vairagya (renunciation), Vigyan (expert and truthful knowledge), Sham (equanimity, restraint), Dam (fortitude, tolerance), Daan (charity) etc.—are all dependant on Lord Ram's holy Name. [They subsist on the Lord's name. That is why it is an established tradition to start anything or any kind of work by invoking the Lord's name first at the beginning of the effort or enterprise.] (7).

Those who have constantly, consistently and persistently imbibed this purified nectar of Lord Ram's name in an abiding form and as a matter of natural habit in the present ferocious and cruel era marked by horrors and torments—they are deemed to have done (i.e. they get the benefit of doing) all types of Tapas (penances, austerities, rigid following of codes of conduct), have performed all Yagyas (religious rituals and sacrifices), have given everything in charity, and have done all the sacraments and rituals sanctioned by the Vedas. [That is, the simple name of Lord Ram is a one-window solution for all the problems tormenting the creature. It is one-dose remedy for all ills afflicting the creature. It encapsulates in it all the spiritual rewards that accrue by doing Tapa, Yagya and Vedic rituals etc.] (8).

Numerous Chandals (out-castes), sinners, Bhils (tribal hunters) and Yavans (heretics, non-believers) etc. have gone to the abode of the Lord on the immense strength of Lord Ram's name, and its astounding good effects and potential powers as a liberator and deliverer. All the vices and evils of this world dared not to touch their wisdom and intellect (i.e. these vices could not corrupt or mislead them).

Oh Tulsidas! Abandon all fears and all kind of hopes from any other source, and instead chant Lord Ram's holy Name which is like a sharp-edged sword to cut through the bindings and snares of this mundane world characterized by delusions and entrapments. (9).

Rāga Bhairava

(65)

राम राम रमु, राम राम रटु, राम राम जपु जीहा ।
 रामनाम—नवनेह—मेहको, मन! हठि होहि पपीहा ।।1।।
 सब साधन—फल कूप—सरित—सर, सागर—सलिल—निरासा ।
 राम—नाम—रति—स्वाति—सुधा—सुभ सीकर प्रेमपियासा ।।2।।
 गरजि, तरजि, पाषान बरषि पवि, प्रीति परखि जिय जानै ।
 अधिक अधिक अनुराग उमँग उर, पर परमिति पहिचानै ।।3।।
 रामनाम—गति, रामनाम—मति, रामनाम—अनुरागी ।
 है गये हैं, जे होहिंगे, तेइ त्रिभुवन गनियत बड़भागी ।।4।।
 एक अंग मग अगमु गवन कर, बिलमु न छिन छिन छाहैं ।
 तुलसी हित अपनो अपनी दिसि, निरुपधि नेम निबाहैं ।।5।।

(65)

rāma rāma ramu, rāma rāma raṭu, rāma rāma japu jīhā.
 rāmanāma-navanēha-mēhakō, mana! haṭhi hōhi papīhā. 1.
 saba sādhana-phala kūpa-sarita-sara, sāgara-salila-nirāsā.
 rāma-nāma-rati-svāti-sudhā-subha sīkara prēmapiyāsā. 2.
 garaji, taraji, pāṣāna baraṣi pavi, prīti parakhi jiya jānai.
 adhika adhika anurāga umamṅa ura, para paramiti pahicānai. 3.
 rāmanāma-gati, rāmanāma-mati, rāmanāma-anurāgi.
 hvai gayē haiṁ, jē hōhiṅgē, tē'i tribhuvana ganiyata barābhāgi. 4.
 ēka aṅga maga agamu gavana kara, bilamu na china china chāhaiṁ.
 tulasī hita apanō apanī disi, nirupadhi nēma nibāhaiṁ. 5.

Verse no. 65—Oh Tongue (jīhā)! You should always be talking about Lord Ram and remain involved in singing the Lord's glories (rāma rāma ramu); you should always be chanting the holy Name 'Ram' of the Lord (rāma rāma raṭu); and you should always be repeating the holy Mantra of Lord Ram constantly (rāma rāma japu).

Oh my Mind and Heart (mana)! Be determined like a Papiha (the sparrow hawk) (haṭhi hōhi papīhā) and be enamoured of the fresh rain-bearing cloud represented by the virtues of devotion and affection for the holy Name of Lord Ram just like this bird is of the cloud that bears rain (rāmanāma-navanēha-mēhakō).

[Oh my dear Mana, think of nothing else except Lord Ram's holy Name and fix your attention on it just like the Papiha bird fixes its attention exclusively on the rain giving cloud. This bird is renowned for its undiluted love for the rain-bearing cloud, and it drinks only the rain drops that fall down from the cloud directly into its beak. Otherwise, the bird prefers to remain thirsty and would rather die than to drink water from any other source. Tulsidas cites the example of this bird's love for the cloud to stress that he also desires to develop sincere and deep devotion, affection and love for the Lord with the same intensity and sincerity as that of the Papiha. He would seek whatever is to be sought exclusively from Lord Ram and his holy Name.] (1).

Even as a Papiha shuns the water of wells, rivers, ponds and even an ocean to quench its thirst, and remains eager to get even a single drop of rain water that its beloved cloud gives directly to it during the Swati Nakshatra (which is a special configuration of stars occurring between August-September), so should you (i.e. the tongue and the Mana) also avoid the hope of satisfying yourself by any other means except by concentrating exclusively and solely on the nectar-like drops of spiritual bliss that are obtained by constant repetition of Lord Ram's holy Name and focusing the attention on the Lord (saba sādhana-phala kūpa-sarita-sara, sāgara-salila-nirāsā. rāma-nāma-rati-svāti-sudhā-subha sīkara prēmapiyāsā). (2).

The lover cloud growls, admonishes, showers hail and strikes the loving Papiha with a thunderbolt (garaji, taraji, pāṣāna baraṣi pavi). In this way when the cloud determines that the unshakeable, eternal and measureless love of the Papiha (prīti parakhi jiya jānai), even after subjecting it to the most rigorous of tests, goes on increasing steadily in its heart with each test and none of its rebukes diminishes the bird's devotion for it even a whit (adhika adhika anurāga umamṅa ura), then only does it graciously oblige the bird with the much sought-after drops of rain water that it puts directly into the bird's mouth as a token of acknowledgement of mutual love and respect for each other (para paramiti pahicānai).

[To wit, the cloud first tests the sincerity of the bird's love and devotion for it by subjecting it to rigorous tests. When it is satisfied that the bird would not budge from its determination then only the cloud showers it with its own love in the form of the rain. Similarly, a devotee is first tested by the Lord about his sincerity of devotion and love as well as his faith in the Lord by subjecting him to apparent neglect and hardships. The trick here is that the devotee should learn to have patience and perseverance. When the Lord finds that the devotee is unwavering in his love and devotion for the Lord, and would cope with everything in order to get the Lord's grace, then the doors of the Lord's treasury of mercy and grace is wide opened for him.] (3).

In a similar fashion (no matter what tribulations, ordeals, torments, agonies, troubles and miseries come to test your sincerity and steadfastness), you should also take refuge in the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram as your last destination (*rāmanāma-gati*), keep your mind, sub-conscious and intellect focused on the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram (*rāmanāma-mati*), and develop sincere love and affection for the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram (*rāmanāma-anurāgi*).

Such devotees who depend on Lord Ram's Name, whether in the past, the present or the future, should be considered as the one who is most privileged, lucky and fortunate in the entire world and its three levels or dimensions (*hvai gayē haiṁ, jē hōhiṅgē, tē'i tribhuvana ganiyata barābhāgi*).

[The phrase 'three levels of the world' has many connotations—such as the past, the present and the future. It also means the terrestrial world, the celestial world and the nether world, as well as the present world, the world after death, and the world of the previous birth.] (4).

This path (of having unflinching, unwavering and sincere love for Lord Ram's holy Name) is lonely and very difficult to follow because there are many distractions and hardships encountered enroute (*ēka aṅga maga agamu gavana kara*). So, once you step on this path, do not stop even momentarily to take rest under a shade (i.e. to enjoy the pleasures of the objects of this materialistic world as you would get deluded and miss your objective) (*bilamu na china china chāhaiṁ*).

Oh Tulsidas (*tulasī*)! Your welfare lies in keeping your allegiance to the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram without having any deceit, pretensions, crookedness, cunning, trickery and deception in your mind (*hita apanō apanī disi, nirupadhi nēma nibāhaiṁ*). [That is, your welfare is ensured only if you have sincere devotion for Lord Ram's holy and divine Name.] (5).

[Note—In this verse, Tulsidas compares Lord Ram to the rain-bearing cloud, the Lord's holy Name to the rain drops, the spiritual bliss, joy and sustenance that one derives from the Lord's glorious Name to the joy, happiness and rejuvenation that the bird Papiha gets by drinking the rain drops, and the devotee of the Lord, who in this particular case is Tulsidas himself, to the bird Papiha itself.

Even as the Papiha loves the cloud so much that it has taken a vow that it would depend solely on it for quenching its thirst by dropping rain drops directly into its beak, a devotee of Lord Ram also depends directly on the grace of the Lord for all his needs, whether they are related to the temporal world or to the spiritual world. A true devotee of the Lord would rather die than go somewhere else to seek what he wants.

In this devotion for the cloud the Papiha is more often than not subjected to extreme sufferings as it is hit by hail falling from the same cloud it loves so much, is

made to get affrightened by the deafening sound of the rupturous thunder and the blinding light of the streak of lightening striking all over the sky to indicate that the cloud is annoyed with its constant display of love for it by fixing its gaze on the cloud and nagging it for rain water—but none of these things deters the Papiha from expressing its love and devotion for the cloud.

The sacrifice of the Papiha does not in vain for finally a time comes when the overwhelmed cloud feels ashamed of itself for being so harsh with its lover who would rather court death than abandon its love for its beloved, and so the cloud lovingly puts the rain drops directly into the mouth of the bird. The wonderful part is that this rain, which is meant for the Papiha, not only benefits a particular bird but a whole generation of living beings on this planet as the cloud pours and pours its rain on earth as a token of largesse and charity to show how grateful it is to the Papiha for its love for the former.

Likewise, when a single devotee sacrifices his life for the sake of love and devotion for Lord Ram and is abundantly rewarded by the Lord, it sets an example for countless others who see this as an example for their own redemption, as a light of hope at the end of the dark tunnel for themselves.

This verse lays the basic foundation for the theme that forms the underlying current in the majority of the verses that follow below in this marvellous Book called Vinai Patrika wherein Tulsidas has repeatedly stressed that no matter how much he has to suffer he would still seek to surrender before Lord Ram and ask for his mercy, for it is sure that the Lord, who is so merciful and compassionate, is only testing his sincerity by being stern in the beginning, and would soon redeem him if he passes the rigorous test of devotion, faith and love for the Lord.]

(66)

राम जपु, राम जपु, राम जपु बावरे ।
 घोर भव—नीर—निधि नाम निज नाव रे ।।1।।
 एक ही साधन सब रिद्धि—सिद्धि साधि रे ।
 ग्रसे कलि—रोग जोग—संजम—समाधि रे ।।2।।
 भलो जो है, पोच जो है, दाहिनो जो, बाम रे ।
 राम—नाम ही सों अंत सब ही को काम रे ।।3।।
 जग नभ—बाटिका रही है फलि फूलि रे ।
 धुवाँ कैसे धौरहर देखि तू न भूलि रे ।।4।।
 राम—नाम छाड़ि जो भरोसो करै और रे ।
 तुलसी परोसो त्यागि माँगै कूर कौर रे ।।5।।

(66)

rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu bāvarē.
 ghōra bhava-nīra-nidhi nāma nija nāva rē. 1.
 ēka hī sādhana saba rid'dhi-sid'dhi sādhi rē.
 grasē kali-rōga jōga-sanjama-samādhi rē. 2.
 bhalō jō hai, pōca jō hai, dāhinō jō, bāma rē.

rāma-nāma hī sōm̐ anta saba hī kō kāma rē. 3.
 jaga nabha-bāṭikā rahī hai phali phūli rē.
 dhuvām̐ kaisē dhaurahara dēkhi tū na bhūli rē. 4.
 rāma-nāma chāḍi jō bharōsō karai aura rē.
 tulasī parōsō tyāgi mām̐gai kūra kaura rē. 5.

Verse no. 66—[Note :- The use of the Hindi word ‘rē’ as in *ray* at the end of each sentence indicates earnest and sincere plea by the loving teacher to convince a rather naughty, stubborn and reluctant disciple to mend his ways, and pay heed to what is being said, lest he would repent later.]

Oh you fool (bāvarē)! Chant Lord Sri Ram's holy Name “RAM” repeatedly; I repeat and stress it—do it (rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu).

It is the only boat we have to ferry us across this worldly ocean (i.e. this is the easiest way to achieve salvation as it is easily available, simplest and accessible to all) (ghōra bhava-nīra-nidhi nāma nija nāva rē) (1).

You can master all virtues and acquire all knowledge with the help of this single medium alone (ēka hī sādhanā saba rid'dhi-sid'dhi sādhi rē) because Yoga (meditation and contemplation), self-control and self-restraint) and Samadhi (a state of meditative trance) etc. have been all eclipsed by the era of Kali (i.e. all other mediums for salvation or liberation of the soul have been over-shadowed or obscured by the evil presence of Kali, and therefore they aren't available) (grasē kali-rōga jōga-sanjama-samādhi rē).

[To wit, you will do yourself a great favour by relying on the Lord's holy Name for your emancipation and salvation because it is easily available to you and would help you to achieve success in all your spiritual endeavours with the least effort and a surety of success that no other method can ever guarantee to you.] (2).

In the end (sōm̐ anta), the holy Name of Lord Ram is the only hope for redemption, it is the only hope for attainment of liberation and deliverance for all of us (rāma-nāma hī saba hī kō kāma rē), whether it is bad or good, upside down or up, i.e. whether chanted backwards or forwards, willingly or unwillingly, with or without faith, conviction and belief—it will only do you good, and be rest assured about it (bhalō jō hai, pōca jō hai, dāhinō jō, bāma rē).

[To wit, it would make no sense in arguing about its worth or worthiness, or whether it is a good spiritual formula or not. It is a wasteful exercise in wasting time and energy in this debate. After all, this holy Name is a time-tested remedy for all spiritual problems and it is like a boat that takes you across the ocean of transmigration with its attendant miseries and horrors. A patient is more concerned about the cure of his illness rather than in discussing the countless options that are available to the doctor for the cure of his disease. The scriptures and great sages and saints have unanimously held that Lord Ram's holy Name is the single-window where a creature can find an answer for his problems, and is a single path that leads directly to liberation and deliverance from this gross mortal world of transmigration. So, it is wiser to pay heed and take the shelter of the Lord's holy and divine Name.

All other paths prescribed in the scriptures are helpful, but they are fraught with dangers of different kinds and magnitudes, involve too many rigid procedures and require careful diligence so much so that they become too arduous and difficult to

follow for a common man. On the other hand, Lord Ram's holy Name is so easy to say that one can repeat it any time of the day and in any manner he likes, without bothering about formalities. The goal is thus easily reached without having to endure any pain and suffering.] (3).

This world is like an illusion of seeing a blossoming garden in the sky—it is a mirage, it is a delusion, it is something that is totally fake (*jaga nabha-bāṭikā rahī hai phali phūli rē*).

All the materials and sense objects in this world are castles and palaces of smoke—here now and gone the next moment (*dhuvām̐ kaisē dhaurahara dēkhi tū na bhūli rē*). [To wit, don't go astray believing the world to be real—it is a total illusion, a mirage. So, focus your attention on the supreme Reality and the supreme Truth instead of getting distracted by false charms of the gross mortal world.] (4).

[Here, Tulsidas warns the creature not to be misled by the temptations of the material world and the attractions of its charming sense objects for all of them are like a fabulous castle seen in the sky, or like the water seen in the mirage on hot sand in a desert. Expecting any worthwhile thing from them is absolute nonsense.]

Tulsidas says that one who relies and depends on others, and not on the holy Name of Lord Ram (*rāma-nāma chāḍi jō bharōsō karai aura rē*), is like a fool who leaves the food in front of him and begs for it from house to house like a dog (*tulasī parōsō tyāgi māṁgai kūra kaura rē*).

[To wit, the medium of emancipation and salvation is in front of you—so why do you search for it somewhere else like a hungry dog foraging for food and nibbling at leftovers from door to door?] (5).

(67)

राम राम जपु जिय सदा सानुराग रे ।
 कलि न बिराग, जोग, जाग, तप, त्याग रे ॥1॥
 राम सुमिरत सब बिधि हीको राज रे ।
 रामको बिसारिबो निषेध—सिरताज रे ॥2॥
 राम—नाम महामनि, फनि जगजाल रे ।
 मनि लिये फनि जियै, ब्याकुल बिहाल रे ॥3॥
 राम—नाम कामतरु देत फल चारि रे ।
 कहत पुरान, बेद, पंडित, पुरारि रे ॥4॥
 राम—नाम प्रेम—परमारथको सार रे ।
 राम—नाम तुलसीको जीवन—अधार रे ॥5॥

(67)

rāma rāma japu jiya sadā sānurāga rē.
kali na birāga, jōga, jāga, tapa, tyāga rē. 1.
rāma sumirata saba bidhi hīkō rāja rē.
rāmakō bisāribō niṣēdha-siratāja rē. 2.

rāma-nāma mahāmani, phani jagajāla rē.
 mani liyē phani jiyai, byākula bihāla rē. 3.
 rāma-nāma kāmataru dēta phala cāri rē.
 kahata purāna, bēda, paṇḍita, purāri rē. 4.
 rāma-nāma prēma-paramārathakō sāra rē.
 rāma-nāma tulasikō jīvana-adhāra rē. 5.

Verse no. 67—[Note :- As if Tulsidas' plea to chant Lord Ram's holy Name could not fully convince his audience, in this verse he continues the argument further, and concludes citing the Vedas and the Purans as his authority.]

Oh Creature! Repeat (chant) Lord Ram's holy Name with abiding and sincere love and devotion in your heart (rāma rāma japu jiya sadā sānurāga rē), for besides Lord Ram's holy Name, nothing (e.g. emancipation, salvation, bliss, tranquility) can be achieved in this era of Kaliyug merely by having Vairagya (renunciation), or by doing Yoga (meditation), Yagya (fire sacrifices and other religious practices), Tapa (austerities and penances), and Daan (making charities and giving of alms) (kali na birāga, jōga, jāga, tapa, tyāga rē). (1).

In the scriptures, clear instructions are laid down as to what should or should not be done (i.e. what constitutes Dharma and Adharma, good deeds and evil/bad deeds) in order to attain one's objective.

But in my (Tulsidas') view, remembering Lord Ram's holy Name is the king among laws and the only secret to attain ones' spiritual objectives (rāma sumirata saba bidhi hīkō rāja rē), and forgetting the Lord and his holy Name is the worst form of evil deed that can be done by a creature (rāmakō bisāribō niṣēdha-siratāja rē). (2).

[The scriptures have laid stress on doing deeds to achieve one's goals. Nothing is achieved by sitting idly doing nothing. Since one has to do something to achieve one's goals, why not do something that has no risk factor and is sure to provide success instead of trying other risky paths that are not only cumbersome, require so much effort but are also fraught with the danger of failure. This easy, effortless and sure-shot path is repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram and taking the shelter of the Lord for all needs.]

This world is like a serpent and Lord Ram's holy Name is like a Mani (a luminous sac on the hood of a serpent which glows in the darkness) (rāma-nāma mahāmani, phani jagajāla rē).

Even as the snake cannot survive when one takes away this Mani from it (mani liyē phani jiyai), so does the world of interminable sorrows, grief and miseries vanishes (cannot survive) on taking Lord Ram's holy Name (byākula bihāla rē) (3).

Ah! This holy Name of Lord Ram is a Kalpa Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree) which gives the celebrated four fruits of 'Artha' (prosperity and wealth), 'Dharma' (righteousness), 'Kaam' (fulfillment of desires) and 'Moksha' (liberation and final deliverance; emancipation and salvation) (rāma-nāma kāmataru dēta phala cāri rē).

This fact is declared, endorsed and ratified by the Vedas, the Purans, the Pandit (wise and expert teachers of spiritual laws), and Lord Shiva (kahata purāna, bēda, paṇḍita, purāri rē) (4).

Lord Ram's holy Name is the essence of the virtues of devotion and love for the Lord, as well as of spiritual welfare and well-being of the soul in this world (rāma-nāma prēma-paramārathakō sāra rē).

Verily indeed and in all sooth, the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram is the very foundation that supports Tulsidas' life, without which he wouldn't be able to survive, and is a source of his well-being (rāma-nāma tulasīkō jīvana-adhāra rē) (5).

(68)

राम राम राम जीह जौलौं तू न जपिहै।
तौलौ, तू कहूँ जाय, तिहूँ ताप तपिहै॥१॥
सुरसरि—तीर बिनु नीर दुख पाइहै।
सुरतरु तरे तोहि दारिद सताइहै॥२॥
जागत, बागत, सपने न सुख सोइहै।
जनम जनम, जुग जुग जग रोइहै॥३॥
छूटिबेके जतन बिसेष बाँधो जायगो।
हैहै बिष भोजन जो सुधा—सानि खायगो॥४॥
तुलसी तिलोक, तिहूँ काल तोसे दीनको।
रामनाम ही की गति जैसे जल मीनको॥५॥

(68)

rāma rāma rāma jīha jaulaum tū na japihai.
taulau, tū kahūṁ jāya, tihūṁ tāpa tapihai. 1.
surasari-tīra binu nīra dukha pā'ihai.
surataru tarē tōhi dārīda satā'ihai. 2.
jāgata, bāgata, sapanē na sukha sō'ihai.
janama janama, juga juga jaga rō'ihai. 3.
chūṭibēkē jatana bisēṣa bām̐dhō jāyagō.
hvaihai biṣa bhōjana jō sudhā-sāni khāyagō. 4.
tulasī tilōka, tihūṁ kālā tōsē dīnakō.
rāmanāma hī kī gati jaisē jala mīnakō. 5.

Verse no. 68—[Note :- Tulsidas warns in this verse what kind of fate awaits us if we do not heed him].

Admonishing the creature, Tulsidas warns—‘Oh, listen you Creature (jīha)! Till the time (taulau) you don't chant Lord Ram's holy Name repeatedly (rāma rāma rāma jaulaum tū na japihai), you can never find peace anywhere—and will continue to burn with the fire of the Traitap (tū kahūṁ jāya, tihūṁ tāpa tapihai).

[The Traitap is the torment that a creature is subjected to because of the following three—(i) Adhyatmik—spiritual problems; (ii) Adhibhautik—problems arising due to existential life in this world; and (iii) Adhidaivik—problems arising due to malignant stars and gods.] (1).

You will be thirsty even while being on the banks of the holy river Ganges (surasari-tīra binu nīra dukha pā'ihai), and poverty shall torment you even while you are staying under the Kalpa Tree (surataru tarē tōhi dārida satā'ihai) (2).

You would never rest in peace—waking, sleeping or dreaming (jāgata, bāgata, sapanē na sukha sō'ihai).

You would have to weep (lament, regret) in this world in all your births, always, and in all the eras in which you take birth (janama janama, juga juga jaga rō'ihai).

[Tulsidas advises the creature that if he does not take the help of Lord Ram's holy Name, he would continue to suffer interminably for all times to come. His condition would be so ironic that he would be like a foolish person who dies of thirst even while living on the banks of the holy river Ganges.] (3).

The more you try other methods for liberation and deliverance, the greater will be your entanglement in this world (because you are far away from Lord Ram's holy Name) (chūṭibēkē jatana bisēṣa bām'dhō jāyagō).

Even the Amrit (which is the delicious drink that gives immortality) would turn poison for you (hvaihai biṣa bhōjana jō sudhā-sāni khāyagō) (4).

Tulsidas says about himself that for a humble person like him (tulasī tōsē dīnakō), in all the three Lokas (subterranean, terrestrial, celestial) and all the three periods (past, present, future) (tilōka, tihūm' kālā), Lord Ram's holy Name is the only destination and habitat, and it has the same importance as the water has for a fish (rāmanāma hī kī gati jaisē jala mīnakō).

[Even as a fish cannot survive without water, Tulsidas can't live without Ram's Name. The water is the fish's natural habitat, and it finds joy and complete rest while being in it. Likewise, Tulsidas says that the Lord's holy Name is his only destination and provider of joy and happiness.] (5).

(69)

सुमिरु सनेहसों तू नाम रामरायको ।
 संबल निसंबलको, सखा असहायको ॥1॥
 भाग है अभागेहूको, गुन गुनहीनको ।
 गाहक गरीबको, दयालु दानि दीनको ॥2॥
 कुल अकुलीनको, सुन्यो है बेद साखि है ।
 पाँगुरेको हाथ-पाँय, आँधरेको आँखि है ॥3॥
 माय-बाप भूखेको, आधार निराधारको ।
 सेतु भव-सागरको, हेतु सुखसारको ॥4॥
 पतितपावन राम-नाम सो न दूसरो ।
 सुमिरि सुभूमि भयो तुलसी सो ऊसरो ॥5॥

(69)

sumiru sanēhasōm tū nāma rāmarāyakō.
 sambala nisambalakō, sakhā asahāyakō. 1.
 bhāga hai abhāgēhūkō, guna gunahīnakō.
 gāhaka garībakō, dayālu dāni dīnakō. 2.
 kula akulīnakō, sun'yō hai bēda sākhi hai.
 pām̐gurēkō hātha-pām̐ya, ām̐dharēkō ām̐khi hai. 3.
 māya-bāpa bhūkhēkō, adhāra nirādhārakō.
 sētu bhava-sāgarakō, hētu sukhasārakō. 4.
 patitapāvana rāma-nāma sō na dūsarō.
 sumiri subhūmi bhayō tulasī sō ūsarō. 5.

Verse no. 69—[Note :- After explaining the importance and value of Ram's holy and divine Name in earlier verses, here Tulsidas emphasises its utility for all creatures in this world, citing the pair of opposites to illustrate his point].

‘Oh Creature, listen! You must always remember Lord Ram's holy Name with the greatest of love and devotion you can command (sumiru sanēhasōm tū nāma rāmarāyakō) as his name is strength and power of those who have no other strength or power of any kind (sambala nisambalakō), and is the best friend of those who are helpless and hapless (sakhā asahāyakō) (1).

This holy Name of Lord Ram is the luck of luck-less (bhāga hai abhāgēhūkō), and is the grand virtue, quality and talent for those who do not have any worthiness in them (guna gunahīnakō). [To wit, those who chant Lord Ram's holy Name are bestowed with good luck and wisdom, and the otherwise worthless creature becomes someone respected and sought after by the world.]

It is like a merchant who respects even the poor (customer) (gāhaka garībakō), and is merciful towards the downtrodden, the deprived and the distressed (dayālu dāni dīnakō). [Such a merchant is respected in the society as compared to one who is selfish.]¹ (2).

[¹The 2nd line of this stanza can be interpreted differently to explain its meaning better as follows: “The holy Name of Lord Ram is so valuable and magical in its effect that those who possess it become like a valuable customer is for a merchant, though he may be otherwise poor in the sense that he lacks any other quality or virtue in him. When a merchant sees a rich customer he goes all out to woo him and offers him the best of the merchandise he has to offer. Likewise, when a luck-less and poverty stricken person repeats the holy Name of Lord Ram, he is warmly welcome and shown great respect in this world wherever he goes inspite of the fact that he has no other qualities in him nor has he done any other religiously meritorious deeds that would ordinary invite such honour.

Similarly, a person who possesses the asset in the form of Lord Ram's holy Name becomes empowered to grant blessings to others as if he was a rich person who would liberally give charity to all those who come seeking something from him. This also invites respect for him in this world.”]

It is heard and even the Vedas are witness to it (sun'yō hai bēda sākhi hai) that those who have a low birth and are downtrodden since birth, the holy Name of Lord Ram is able to lift them to an exalted stature where they get the same honour and respect that those born in a higher caste or have a noble pedigree are entitled to get (kula akulīnakō).

[To wit, even a low-caste-born is to be considered a high-caste-born if he chants the holy Name of Lord Ram.]

Lord Ram's holy Name is akin to the limbs of a lame (pāmṅurēkō hātha-pāmṅya), and eyes for the blind (āmḍharēkō āmḍkhi hai) (3).

This holy Name of Lord Ram is like a parent for the hungry (for a hungry man is sure to find food in the house of his parents) (māya-bāpa bhūkhēkō), and a source of help and solace for the helpless and the wretched (adhāra nirādhārakō).

It is like a bridge to cross this ocean-like mundane world of transmigration with its formidable problems and miseries (sētu bhava-sāgarakō). [That is, to cross over this mortal world of birth and death, and find immortality instead, to break free from the shackles of this world and find liberation for the soul, the holy Name of Lord Ram is like a bridge that helps one to cross over from one side to another effortlessly.]

The holy Name is the source of eternal bliss and beatitude for the creature and his soul (hētu suhasāarakō) (4).

There is no other Name or Entity which is more helpful and beneficial for the creature than Lord Ram's holy Name which makes even the most sinful and unholy person into one who is pure and holy (patitapāvana rāma-nāma sō na dūsarō), because the mere remembrance of which has turned the useless Tulsidas, who was as worthless as a dry and barren moorland, into a fertile land sought after by all (sumiri subhūmi bhayō tulasī sō ūsarō).'

[To wit, even the worthless Tulsidas has become so venerated, honoured and sought after in the society when he has taken the shelter of Lord Ram's holy Name. Earlier the same Tulsidas was subjected to scorn, rebuke and ridicule by the same society that now respects him. All this is obviously due to the marvellous effects of Lord Ram's holy and divine Name that has so profoundly affected Tulsidas' fate that from being derided and scorned at he has now become a great saint who is shown respect by one and all. Tulsidas says that he possesses no qualities worth the name, and so the only obvious reason for this honour is that he openly chants Lord Ram's holy Name wherever he goes.] (5).

(70)

भलो भली भाँति है जो मेरे कहे लागि है ।
मन राम—नामसों सुभाय अनुरागि है ॥१॥
राम—नामको प्रभाउ जानि जूड़ी आगि है ।
सहित सहाय कलिकाल भीरु भागि है ॥२॥
राम—नामसों बिराग, जोग, जप जागि है ।

बाम बिधि भाल हू न करम दाग दागिहै ।।3।।
 राम—नाम मोदक सनेह सुधा पागिहै ।
 पाइ परितोष तू न द्वार द्वार बागिहै ।।4।।
 राम—नाम काम—तरु जोइ जोइ माँगिहै ।
 तुलसीदास स्वारथ परमारथ न खाँगिहै ।।5।।

(70)

bhalō bhalī bhām̐ti hai jō mērē kahē lāgihai.
 mana rāma-nāmasōm̐ subhāya anurāgihai. 1.
 rāma-nāmakō prabhā'u jāni jūrī āgihai.
 sahita sahāya kalikāla bhīru bhāgihai. 2.
 rāma-nāmasōm̐ birāga, jōga, japa jāgihai.
 bāma bidhi bhāla hū na karama dāga dāgihai. 3.
 rāma-nāma mōdaka sanēha sudhā pāgihai.
 pā'i paritōṣa tū na dvāra dvāra bāgihai. 4.
 rāma-nāma kām-taru jō'i jō'i mām̐gihai.
 tulasīdāsa svāratha paramāratha na khām̐gihai. 5.

Verse no. 70—[Note :- After pleading with his disciple to chant Ram's holy Name repeatedly, warning for the consequences of not doing so, pleading again citing opposite circumstances which are benefited by Lord's holy Name, Tulsidas finally and lovingly requests his disciple to chant the Name, and obtain the benefits that he will reap from it.]

‘Oh my dear! If you pay heed to me and follow what I say, you would benefit and set to gain in all possible ways (bhalō bhalī bhām̐ti hai jō mērē kahē lāgihai).

I'm telling this for your own good that you must forthwith develop full devotion and love for the holy Name of Lord Ram in your Mana (heart and mind) (mana rāma-nāmasōm̐ subhāya anurāgihai) (1).

Forsooth, Lord Ram's holy Name is like a fire which removes the shiver of extreme cold of the chilly winter season (rāma-nāmakō prabhā'u jāni jūrī āgihai).

Kaliyug—which can deflect one's wisdom from the path of good—runs away with all its companions out of fear on hearing this Name (sahita sahāya kalikāla bhīru bhāgihai). [To wit, when a person takes the shelter of Lord Ram's holy Name, the Kaliyug stops tormenting him and creating mischief for him. He is left alone in peace.] (2).

Vairagya (renunciation), Yoga (meditation), and Tapa (austerity and penance) etc. would become effective and powerful by merely chanting or repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram for it acts as a catalyst for their being effective and beneficial for a person (rāma-nāmasōm̐ birāga, jōga, japa jāgihai).

Even a jealous and malignant Brahma (the creator who writes destiny) would not be able to blame you for your evil deeds (i.e. all the accumulated results of your past bad deeds will be eliminated forthwith as soon as you start repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram) (bāma bidhi bhāla hū na karama dāga dāgihai).¹ (3).

[¹The holy Name of Lord Ram is so powerful that it not only neutralizes all the negative effects of misdeeds done by a creature but also gives him a credit balance in his spiritual account. So the Creator can't find any fault with this creature at the time of judgement, and is compelled to show him the path to heaven like a person who has done great religious merit in his life.]

If you eat a 'Laddu' (a ball-shaped sweet made of gram flour soaked in clarified butter and mixed with sugar) made of Lord Ram's holy Name which is soaked in the Amrit (a divine and sweet liquid that gives immortality; here meaning 'honey') of love and devotion (*rāma-nāma mōdaka sanēha sudhā pāgihai*), you shall get the highest degree of satisfaction and contentment which would ensure that you don't have to go from door to door seeking anything ever (*pā'i paritōṣa tū na dvāra dvāra bāgihai*).

[To wit, you will feel so contented and happy, so blissful and ecstatic, that nothing more would be left for you to want or expect in this life. 'Door to door' is a phrase meaning from one place to another or from one source to another seeking peace, happiness, bliss and rest for the soul.] (4).'

Addressing himself, Tulsidas says: 'Ram's holy Name is like a Kalpa Tree that fulfils all wishes (*rāma-nāma kāma-taru*). You will get whatever you ask of it, you will not be left wanting (*jō'i jō'i māmṅihai*). It will fulfil your wishes relating to your selfish interests in this world as well as your wishes for spiritual welfare and happiness (*tulasīdāsa svāratha paramāratha na khāmṅihai*).'

[To wit, the holy Name of the Lord will fulfil all your wants, both the ones pertaining to this world as well as the ones pertaining to the requirements of your soul—i.e. its need for emancipation and salvation, for peace and tranquility, for bliss and happiness.] (5).

(129)

रुचिर रसना तू राम राम राम क्यों न रटत ।
 सुमिरत सुख-सुकृत बढ़त, अघ-अमंगल घटत ॥1॥
 बिनु श्रम कलि-कलुष-जाल कटु कराल कटत ।
 दिनकरके उदय जैसे तिमिर-तोम फटत ॥2॥
 जोग, जाग, जप, बिराग, तप, सुतीरथ-अटत ।
 बाँधबेको भव-गयंद रेनुकी रजु बटत ॥3॥
 परिहरि सुर-मनि सुनाम, गुंजा लखि लटत ।
 लालच लघु तेरो लखि, तुलसि तोहि हटत ॥4॥

(129)

rucira rasanā tū rāma rāma rāma kyōm na raṭata.
 sumirata sukha-sukṛta baṛhata, agha-amaṅgala ghaṭata. 1.
 binu śrama kali-kaluṣa-jāla kaṭu karāla kaṭata.

dinakarake udaya jaise timira-toma phatata. 2.
 joga, jaga, japa, biraga, tapa, sutiratha-atata.
 bamdhabeko bhava-gayanda renuki raju batata. 3.
 parihari sura-mani sunama, gunja lakhi latata.
 lalaca laghu tero lakhi, tulasi tohim hatata. 4.

Verse no. 129—Oh you sweet Tongue¹ (rucira rasanā), why don't you chant 'rāma rāma rāma' repeatedly and incessantly (tū rāma rāma rāma kyōm na raṭata), the mere remembrance of which holy Name or the mere utterance of this holy word exponentially increases happiness, joy, noble virtues and merits manifold times (sumirata sukha-sukṛta barhata), while at the same time the numerous sins, evils and inauspiciousness are decreased in the same proportion (agha-amaṅgala ghaṭata)².

[¹Refer also to verse no. 237 and 247 of this Book 'Vinai Patrika' where Tulsidas has given a similar advice to the Tongue.

²Refer verse no. 130 herein below.] (1).

By remembering Lord Sri Ram's holy Name, the terrible and fierce web of Kaliyug-induced sins and vices are removed without making much of an effort (or by the least effort) (binu śrama kali-kaluṣa-jāla kaṭu karāla kaṭata) even as darkness is torn apart (i.e. shattered, removed) on the appearance of the sun (dinakarake udaya jaise timira-toma phatata)³.

[²Just as the darkness of the night disappears automatically when the sun appears in the sky so do all the spiritual tormentors disappear as soon as Lord Ram's holy Name is remembered and invoked.] (2).

Abandoning Lord Sri Ram's holy Name and relying on Jōga (Yoga; meditation and concentration), Jāga (Yagya; fire and other religious sacrifices), Japa (chanting of the Lord's various Mantras), Birāga (Vairagya; renunciation), Tapa (austerities, penances), and Sutiratha (pilgrimage) to attain freedom from one's spiritual sufferings is akin to trying to tame a wild elephant by using a rope made from particles of sand (bāmḍhabēkō bhava-gayanda rēnukī raju baṭata)⁴.

[⁴To wit, just as it is impossible to tie an elephant with a rope made of sand particles, so it is also impossible to find spiritual peace and deliverance from the world by employing any one or all of the methods outlined here, without relying solely on the potent powers of Lord Sri Ram's holy Name. For in all sooth, Lord Ram's holy Name is the only panacea that can give all the benefits one expects from all these listed exercises, but without having to undergo their hardships and uncertainties.] (3).

Leaving aside the beautiful and priceless gem called "sura-mani", also known as the 'Chintamani'⁵ (a gem belonging to the Gods which is said to remove all sorts of worries) that is symbolised by the sweet and holy Name of the Lord (parihari sura-mani sunāma), you look covetously and greedily elsewhere, tempted by the charms of the seeds of the worthless 'gunjā' (seeds of a shrub called abrus presotorius) which represent the pleasures of the sensual objects of the world (gunjā lakhi latata).

I, Tulsidas, have decided to sternly warn and admonish you (tulasi tōhim haṭata) when I observe your foolishness and your meanness in the way you are

tempted by such worthless things as the attractions of the gross perishable world and waste your time in thinking and talking about them at the cost of the priceless jewel symbolised by Lord Ram's holy Name which you seem to have abandoned (*lālaca laghu tērō lakhi*) (4).

[⁵Chintamani is a miracle gem that removes all worries.]

(130)

राम राम, राम राम, राम राम, जपत ।
मंगल-मुद उदित होत, कलि-मल-छल छपत ॥1॥
कहु कै लहे फल रसाल, बबुर बीज बपत ।
हारहि जनि जनम जाय गाल गूल गपत ॥2॥
काल, करम, गुन, सुभाउ सबके सीस तपत ।
राम-नाम-महिमा की चरचा चले चपत ॥3॥
साधन बिनु सिद्धि सकल बिकल लोग लपत ।
कलियुग बर बनिज बिपुल नाम-नगर खपत ॥4॥
नाम सों प्रतीति-प्रीति हृदय सुथिर थपत ।
पावन किये रावन-रिपु तुलसिहु-से अपत ॥5॥

(130)

rāma rāma, rāma rāma, rāma rāma, japata.
maṅgala-muda uditā hōta, kali-mala-chala chapata. 1.
kahu kē lahē phala rasāla, babura bīja bapata.
hārahi jani janama jāya gāla gūla gapata. 2.
kāla, karama, guna, subhā'u sabakē sīsa tapata.
rāma-nāma-mahimā kī caracā calē capata. 3.
sādhana binu sid'dhi sakala bikala lōga lapata.
kalijuga bara baniya bipula nāma-nagara khapata. 4.
nāma sōm pratīti-prīti hṛdaya suthira thapata.
pāvana kiye rāvana-ripu tulasihu-sē apata. 5.

Verse no. 130—[Continuing his advice to the Tongue, Tulsidas says—] By constantly remembering and repeating (or chanting—“japata”) Lord Sri Ram's holy Name “rāma rāma, rāma rāma, rāma rāma”, all sorts of goodnesses, auspiciousness, welfare, happiness and joy arise and become ascendant (*maṅgala-muda uditā hōta*), while sins, evils, deceit, crookedness and other faults and defects of Kaliyug go into hiding or become obscure (*kali-mala-chala chapata*)¹ (1).

[¹Refer also to verse no. 129.]

Has anyone ever got the Mango fruit by sowing seeds of the Babul tree (the acacia plant) (*kahu kē lahē phala rasāla, babura bīja bapata*)?

Hence, don't waste your rare-to-obtain human birth by futile chatter, heresy, tattle, gossip and boastful talk (*hārahi jani janama jāya gāla gūla gapata*). [Because such activities only go to waste your precious time and breath, and give no

positive results that could do good to you. Therefore, you will be well advised if you abandon all this, and instead use your tongue and time and breath in invoking the Lord's grace and remembering his holy Name as this exercise would certainly provide you with auspiciousness and all round welfare.] (2).

The negative effects (i.e. the many sort of agitations, problems, torments, sufferings etc.) associated with 'Kaal' (death; time; circumstances), 'Karma' (deeds), 'Guna' (qualities, character traits) and 'Swabhaava' (temperament, natural inclinations, habit, inherent tendencies) are constantly tormenting all the creatures as if it were some fever burning in the head (*kāla, karama, guna, subhā'u sabakē sīsa tapata*). [To wit, everyone is suffering due to their evil effects just like one suffers when he has high fever.]

In this situation, Lord Ram's holy Name and stories of his glories act like a soothing balm, for as soon as they are invoked the various agitations and restlessness subside, and the creature finds rest and peace (*rāma-nāma-mahimā kī caracā calē capata*)².

[²When a person is suffering from high fever and has a severe headache, a cool pad or a block of ice is applied on his forehead to bring down the fever and give relief from the headache. This is in addition to the medicines given to him. Likewise, when a creature is suffering from so much horrors created by Kaliyug, and is not finding any relief inspite of practicing so many methods prescribed by the scriptures, the easiest and the best way for him is to repeat the holy Name of Lord Ram as it would instantly give him peace and rest.

Therefore, it is wise and recommended that one should repeat Lord Ram's holy Name and remember the Lord's glories in order to neutralise the spiritual torments from which the creature suffers. Just like a person takes a medicine as well as applies a cold pad on his forehead to get quick relief from the sufferings caused by high fever, a creature would find peace and bliss when he remembers Lord Ram and his holy Name in addition to following other methods prescribed by the scriptures.] (3).

The people are eager to obtain all 'Siddhis' (achievements, successes, special powers, endowments) without having any proper means or wherewithal to do so—how is this possible (*sādhana binu sid'dhi sakala bikala lōga lapata*)?

The hoard of bad merchandise accumulated by Kaliyug are all consumed in the city of Lord Sri Ram's Name (*kalijuga bara banija bipula nāma-nagara khapata*).

[To wit, the treasure of sins hoarded by Kaliyug are like a trader's stock of bad merchandise that he wishes to sell off at the earliest because they would go down in price the longer they are left to rot in his godown. Lord Ram's holy Name is like the city where all such things are consumed at the earliest by the potential powers and effects of Lord Sri Ram's holy Name.] (4).

The heart becomes fully satisfied, blissful and stable by having faith, belief, devotion, reverence and love for Lord Sri Ram's holy Name (*nāma sōm pratīti-prīti hr̥daya suthira thapata*).

Verily indeed and in all sooth, Lord Sri Ram's holy Name is so powerful and purifying that it gave peace and deliverance to even a ferocious enemy of the world, the cruel, sinful and vile demon named Ravana, the demon king of Lanka (*pāvana*

kiyē rāvana-ripu), as well as to the most humble, poor, fallen and lowly person such as Tulsidas (tulasihu-sē apata)².

[²The main idea here is that Lord Ram's holy Name benefits all the creatures irrespective of who they are. Even the most sinful, vile and fallen can get the same spiritual reward by invoking Lord Ram's holy Name as is granted to those who are better and more righteous. It is like the case of a medicine taken for fever: the correct medicine would cure the disease irrespective of who takes it, of what gender, age, temperament, social standing etc. he or she is, and on whose given this advice.

Ravana was a very wicked and cruel demon. But even he got liberation and deliverance for himself by remembering Lord Ram constantly, albeit he did so out of fear for his life and treating Lord Ram as his arch enemy.

Another example is of Tulsidas—for he says that he is among the most humble and ordinary people in the world, but by the grace of Lord Ram and the Lord's holy Name he too has found his peace and happiness.] (5).

(131)

पावन प्रेम राम—चरन—कमल जनम लाहु परम ।
 रामनाम लेत होत, सुलभ सकल धरम ॥1॥
 जोग, मख, बिबेक, बिरति, बेद—बिदित करम ।
 करिबे कहँ कटु कठोर, सुनत मधुर, नरम ॥2॥
 तुलसि सुनि, जानि—बूझि, भूलहि जनि भरम ।
 तेहि प्रभुको होहि, जाहि सब ही की सरम ॥3॥

(131)

pāvana prēma rāma-carana-kamala janama lāhu parama.
 rāmanāma lēta hōta, sulabha sakala dharama. 1.
 jōga, makha, bibēka, birati, bēda-bidita karama.
 karibē kham'kaṭu kaṭhōra, sunata madhura, narama. 2.
 tulasi suni, jāni-būjhi, bhūlahi jani bharama.
 tēhi prabhukō hōhi, jāhi saba hī kī sarama. 3.

Verse no. 131—The supreme or the best fruit and the spiritual reward that can be obtained for being born as a human being in this life is to have selfless, sincere, naturally pure and deceitless love, affection and devotion in the lotus-like holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (pāvana prēma rāma-carana-kamala janama lāhu parama).

Similarly, all the fruits obtainable by adhering to 'Dharma' (i.e. leading a taintless life of scrupulousness in accordance with the principles of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, noble thought and conduct) are accessible instantly by uttering Lord Sri Ram's holy Name (rāmanāma lēta hōta, sulabha sakala dharama) (1).

The Vedas (the primary and ancient scriptures) have prescribed many paths such as meditation, rituals, elaborate sacrifices, wisdom, acquisition of knowledge

discrimination and renunciation etc. (jōga, makha, bibēka, birati, bēda-bidita karama) which are all pleasant to hear about and potentially beneficial as well (sunata madhura, narama), but the problem is that they are most difficult to practice and are also ridden with or interrupted by many hurdles and obstacles that make their implementation hazardous and almost impossible (karibē kaham̐ kaṭu kaṭhōra)¹.

[¹To wit, it is easy to talk about and preach of the many spiritual paths, philosophies and doctrines detailed in the Vedas and other scriptures, but to put them into practice is like a nightmare and well nigh impossible. So, the solution, and the easiest one at that, is to have devotion for Lord Ram and the Lord's holy feet, as well to remember the Lord and invoke his holy Name.] (2).

Therefore, oh Tulsidas, don't be lost in the maze created by this illusion (regarding the attainment of your spiritual goal by trying to follow or hopping between the countless options mentioned herein above that are like the shimmering mirage in the desert) because they would cause distraction for you and divert you from your true goal in life (tulasi suni, jāni-būjhi, bhūlahi jani bharama).

Be wise and become an ardent devotee of the Lord who cares for all (tēhi prabhukō hōhi, jāhi saba hī kī sarama)².

[²To wit, do not be misled that these paths prescribed by the Vedas will give you salvation or liberate you from the vicious cycle of birth and death—you'll land in a quagmire of doing formal rituals and countless exercises that will lead you nowhere. Hence, you will be best advised to adopt the easy, simple, infallible and time-tested path of chanting Lord Sri Ram's holy Name, and having devotion and love for the Lord.] (3).

(144)

सो धौं को जो नाम—लाज तें, नहिं राख्यो रघुबीर ।
करुनीक बिनु कारन ही हरि हरी सकल भव—भीर ॥1॥
बेद—बिदित, जग—बिदित अजामिल बिप्रबंधु अघ—धाम ।
घोर जमालय जात निवास्थो सुत—हित सुमिरत नाम ॥2॥
पसु पामर अभिमान—सिंधु गज ग्रस्थो आइ जब ग्राह ।
सुमिरत सकृत् सपदि आये प्रभु, हस्थो दुसह उर—दाह ॥3॥
ब्याध, निषाद, गीध, गनिकादिक, अगनित औगुन—मूल ।
नाम—ओटतें राम सबनिकी दूर करी सब सूल ॥4॥
केहि आचरन घाटि हौं तिनतें, रघुकुल—भूषन भूप ।
सीदत तुलसिदास निसिबासर पस्थो भीम तम—कूप ॥5॥

(144)

sō dhauṁ kō jō nāma-lāja tēm, nahim rākhyō raghubīra.
karunīka binu kārana hī hari harī sakala bhava-bhīra. 1.
bēda-bidita, jaga-bidita ajāmila biprabandhu agha-dhāma.

ghōra jamālaya jāta nivāryō suta-hita sumirata nāma. 2.
 pasu pāmara abhimāna-sindhu gaja grasyō ā'i jaba grāha.
 sumirata sakṛta sapadi āyē prabhu, haryō dusaha ura-dāha. 3.
 byādha, niṣāda, gīdha, ganikādika, aganita auguna-mūla.
 nāma-ōṭatēm rāma sabanikī dūri karī saba sūla. 4.
 kēhi ācarana ghāṭi hauri tinatēm, raghukula-bhūṣana bhūpa.
 sīdata tulasidāsa nisibāsara paryō bhīma tama-kūpa. 5.

Verse no. 144—Oh Lord Raghubīra (Sri Ram)! Who is there whom you have not given refuge and shelter (i.e. promise of protection and safety) for the sake of maintaining the sanctity, the good fame and the wonderful mystical powers (that frees the creature from all his worries and torments) that are inherent in and characteristic of your holy Name (sō dhauri kō jō nāma-lāja tēm, nahim rākhyō)?

Oh Hari (Ram)! You show mercy and kindness selflessly upon a creature, and remove the fear arising from this world (consisting of an endless cycle of birth and death and their incumbent horrors) even without having any specific or urgent cause or reason for doing so (karunīka binu kārana hī hari harī sakala bhava-bhīra)¹.

[¹To wit, it is the Lord's nature and habit to provide solace and succour to all those who take refuge with him and seek shelter under the protective shade of the Lord's holy Name. The selflessly gracious and benevolent Lord helps all to overcome the fear of this world of transmigration by being merciful and kind towards all of them in a universal way, and without distinction of any kind. The Lord shows his grace selflessly, without expecting any thanks from anybody, without any obligations of any kind whatever. Verily and in all sooth, the Lord is a selfless benefactor for all living beings.] (1).

It is well-known in the Vedas as well as the world (bēda-bidita, jaga-bidita) that a person named Ajamil of the Brahmin race (ajāmila biprabandhu) was an embodiment of great sins and vices, and he had countless faults in him (agha-dhāma).

At the time of his death, literally at the time of his departure for Yam's Loka where the suffering is hellish (ghōra jamālaya jāta), he had called out your name 'Narain' (or Narayan), though it was ostensible for the purpose of calling his son with a similar name. But since he had called your name (Narayan), you had intervened and stopped him from going to hell and suffering there (nivāryō suta-hita sumirata nāma). (2).

Similarly, when the Crocodile (grāha) had caught hold of the feet of the king of Elephants (known as 'Gaja') who was an ocean of (i.e. full of) haughtiness and vanity, and was a sinful and lowly animal (pasu pāmara abhimāna-sindhu gaja), and when the Crocodile was ready to drag him into the water to devour him (grasyō ā'i jaba)—at that time oh Lord, as soon as the panicky Elephant did one good thing which was to remember you and seek your protection (sumirata sakṛta), you had rushed forward barefoot instantly (sapadi āyē prabhu) to protect and liberate him from the clutches of his tormentor. You had thus removed the Elephant's intolerable agonies and had given him liberation from the horrors of certain death in the jaws of the Crocodile that was about to kill him (haryō dusaha ura-dāha). (3).

The cruel hunter and bandit (i.e. Valmiki), Nishad (the boatman), the vulture (Jatau), Ganika (the prostitute named Pingala) and other numerous living beings (byādha, niṣāda, gīdha, ganikādika, aganita) who were all virtual treasuries of sins and vices and misdeeds (aganita auguna-mūla)—Oh Lord Ram, they were all freed from the fear, the agony and the suffering caused by their sins by the grace of your holy Name RAAM which acted like a strong shield to protect them from their torments and misfortunes (nāma-ōṭatēm rāma sabanikī dūri karī saba sūla)⁴.

[⁴To wit, Lord Ram's holy Name gave freedom to all these sinners who would otherwise have had to suffer hugely due to their sinful lives. All of them became easily eligible for liberation and deliverance by uttering the holy Name of Lord Ram though they were highly sinful and evil otherwise. The Lord's holy Name acted like a shield around them, affording them protection from the scourging effects of their sinful lives.] (4).

Oh the Lord who is like an ornament (jewel) of King Raghu's family of Ayodhya, and is the most exalted Lord of all (raghukula-bhūṣana bhūpa)! How am I a lesser evil and a less sinful person than any of them (i.e. the persons cited by me herein above in this verse) in any way (with respect to any of my deeds and behaviour) (kēhi ācarana ghāṭi haum tinatēm)?

Inspite of that, I, Tulsidas, am suffering night and day in the fierce, dark and fearful well of ignorance in which I have fallen (sīdata tulasidāsa nisibāsara paryō bhīma tama-kūpa)⁵!

[⁵Oh Lord! If you could save those creatures whom I have mentioned above, I beg you to save me also and mitigate my sorrows and troubles like you did for them. I am no less a sinner than any of them, and if it is your wont and famed reputation that you are committed to save even those who are the worst affected and hopeless cases, those who are great sinners and evil persons, than why do you not pay attention to me because I am no better than any of them. If these sinners were eligible for receiving a special treatment from you, then I too fit the bill perfectly. You cannot therefore deny me my right of having your grace and mercy.] (5).

(145)

कृपासिंधु! जन दीन दुवारे दादि न पावत काहे।
जब जहँ तुमहिं पुकारत आरत, तहँ तिन्हके दुख दाहे॥1॥
गज, प्रह्लाद, पांडुसुत, कपि, सबको रिपु-संकट मेट्यो।
प्रनत, बंधु-भय-बिकल, बिभीषन, उठि सो भरत ज्यों भेट्यो॥2॥
मैं तुम्हरो लेइ नाम ग्राम इक उर आपने बसावों।
भजन, बिबेक, बिराग, लोग भले, मैं क्रम-क्रम करि ल्यावों॥3॥
सुनि रिस भरे कुटिल कामादिक, करहिं जोर बरिआई।
तिन्हहिं उजारि नारि-अरि-धन पुर राखहिं राम गुसाई॥4॥
सम-सेवा-छल-दान-दंड हौं, रचि उपाय पचि हास्यो।
बिनु कारनको कलह बड़ो दुख, प्रभुसों प्रगटि पुकार्यो॥5॥
सुर स्वारथी, अनीस, अलायक, निठुर, दया चित नाहीं।
जाउँ कहाँ, को बिपति-निवारक, भवतारक जग माहीं॥6॥
तुलसी जदपि पोच, तउ तुम्हरो, और न काहू केरो।
दीजे भगति-बाँह बारक, ज्यों सुबस बसै अब खेरो॥7॥

(145)

krpāsindhu! jana dīna duvārē dādi na pāvata kāhē.
 jaba jaham̃ tumahiṁ pukārata ārata, taham̃ tinhakē dukha dāhē. 1.
 gaja, prahalāda, pāṇḍusuta, kapi, sabakō ripu-saṅkaṭa mēṭyō.
 pranata, bandhu-bhaya-bikala, bibhīṣana, uṭhi sō bharata jyōṁ bhēṭyō. 2.
 maiṁ tumharō lē'i nāma grāma ika ura āpanē basāvōṁ.
 bhajana, bibēka, birāga, lōga bhalē, maiṁ krama-krama kari lyāvōṁ. 3.
 suni risa bharē kuṭila kāmādika, karahiṁ jōra bari'ā'īm.
 tinhahiṁ ujāri nāri-ari-dhana pura rākhahiṁ rāma gusā'īm. 4.
 sama-sēvā-chala-dāna-daṇḍa hauṁ, raci upāya paci hāryō.
 binu kāranakō kalaha baṛō dukha, prabhusōṁ pragaṭi pukāryō. 5.
 sura svārathī, anīsa, alāyaka, niṭhura, dayā cita nāhīm.
 jā'um̃ kahām̃, kō bipati-nivāraka, bhavatāraka jaga māhīm. 6.
 tulasī jadapi pōca, ta'u tumharō, aura na kāhū kērō.
 dījai bhagati-bām̃ha bāraka, jyōṁ subasa basai aba khērō. 7.

Verse no. 145—[Continuing with his pleas as made in the last stanza of the previous verse no. 144, Tulsidas asks Lord Ram—]

Oh an Ocean of Mercy (krpāsindhu)! I wonder why this humble follower of yours (i.e. Tulsidas) is not getting any help and succour at your doorstep (i.e. from you) (jana dīna duvārē dādi na pāvata kāhē).

When and wherever (jaba jaham̃), those who were distressed, distraught, miserable and sorrowful had called out to you and pleaded for your mercy and grace (tumahiṁ pukārata ārata), you had responded positively and instantly by removing their agonies and torments right there (taham̃ tinhakē dukha dāhē). [But alas, you seem not to listen to my pleadings. Lord, why is it so?] (1).

You had removed all the sufferings and torments inflicted upon Prahalad, Gajraj (the king of elephants), the Pandavas, Sugriv etc. by their respective enemies (gaja, prahalāda, pāṇḍusuta, kapi, sabakō ripu-saṅkaṭa mēṭyō).

When Vibhishan¹—who was extremely terrified and agitated due to fear from his elder brother Ravana (the demon king of Lanka) (bandhu-bhaya-bikala, bibhīṣana)—had come to seek refuge and protection from you by surrendering before you and had prostrated before you (pranata), you had met him immediately, lifting him up and affectionately embracing him as if he were your own younger brother Bharat (uṭhi sō bharata jyōṁ bhēṭyō). [Say of Lord, then why are you not heeding me and my prayers? Why, am I worse than him? Why aren't you showing at least the same sort of treatment to me, if not something more better?]

[¹Vibhishan was the younger brother of Ravana and a devout devotee of the Lord in the form of Sri Ram. He was like an oasis of devotion, faith and love in the desert of demons and their reckless misdemeanours and cruelties. He had advised Ravana that Sri Ram was no ordinary prince, and that Sita should be returned to Ram if Ravana wished to save Lanka and himself from total destruction. This advice annoyed Ravana who kicked Vibhishan and ordered him to leave his city. Vibhishan was very exasperated by his brother's behaviour of insulting in in full court, and so in

consternation and indignation he decided to go and seek refuge with Lord Ram. The Lord not only warmly welcomed him in his camp but also anointed him as the next king of Lanka. The story of Vibhishan and his surrender to Lord Ram, and his subsequent anointment by the Lord as the next king of Lanka has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.

In the final battle with Ravana, it was he who had told the secret of Ravana's life and invincibility—the elixir of life cocooned in his navel. Sri Ram killed Ravana by shooting an arrow, among others, at his navel and absorbing or drying up the nectar. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 102.

But, Vibhishan got the eternal ignominy of being symbolic of betrayal and fratricide.] (2).

By using the means of chanting your holy Name, and on the strength of it, I desire to establish a holy village in my heart (mair̥m tumharō lē'i nāma grāma ika ura āpanē basāvōm).

In order to populate this village, I search here and there for good, auspicious noble and pious entities symbolised by the grand virtues such as that of worship, veneration, devotion, wisdom, discrimination, renunciation, detachment etc., and invite them one by one to gradually come in and reside in this village which I wish to establish in my heart in your Name (bhajana, bibēka, birāga, lōga bhalē, mair̥m krama-krama kari lyāvōm) (3).

But hearing about this noble venture of mine, countless wicked forces symbolised by such negativities as desires, lust, anger, greed, avarice, attachments, infatuations, arrogance, pride, vanity, hypocrisy, jealousy, envy and other such wicked ones become annoyed (suni risa bharē kuṭila kāmādika); they don't like me cleansing my innerself (for they fear for their own habitat, and wonder what would happen to them if I allow good virtues to take a firm root in my heart as well as in my mind). So, they have all teamed together to throw a spanner in the wheel and disrupt everything for me.

These naughty fellows are interfering in my efforts and creating a lot of mischief and nuisance for me by forcefully trying to eject any good inhabitants (i.e. good characters, virtues, habits, temperaments and traits) that I manage to somehow bring into the noble village I intend to establish inside my heart (karahim̥ jōra bari'ā'im̥).

Oh my dear Lord Ram (rāma gusā'im̥), in place of the good things with which I try to fill my heart, these rascals bring in vile and evil ones such as wicked women, enemies, wealth and other such vices, and make them take up residence in my symbolic village (i.e. in my heart) (tinahim̥ ujāri nāri-ari-dhana pura rākhahim̥)².

[²Tulsidas here says that after realising that his heart needs to be purified of all negativities and corruptions so that it can be turned into an abode of Lord Ram where abiding peace and eternal bliss can be experienced, he is trying his best to inculcate good habits, noble virtues and ideal characters in him. But despite his best efforts there are some strong negative forces that dampen his spirits as they do not like his

cleansing efforts. Whatever good virtues and characters Tulsidas tries to establish in his heart, the negative forces listed herein above neutralise his endeavours.

For instance, suppose he tries to develop dispassion in his heart, then immediately the passions that are naturally but latently present inside him raise their hoods in his mind and heart, and he once again begins to lust for the pleasures and comforts of the sense objects of the world and begins to yield to the temptation to gratify his sense organs. If he takes two steps forward towards righteousness with great effort, he is pulled back more than two steps by the evil forces. So in this scenario, the poor creature sees no hope except from Lord Ram.

Refer also to verse no. 147, stanza no. 2 herein below.] (4).

I have become tired and weary of adopting various dignified means or methods to achieve my noble objectives, such as practicing the principles of **sama** (treating all alike with courtesy and sweetness), **sēvā** (selfless service), **chala** (being clever, prudent and practical in my dealings with others to ensure that my objective is not compromised), **dāna** (giving charities, alms and donations to accumulate religious merit), and **daṇḍa** (using force if someone tries to disturb me and spoil my efforts).

Despite all my efforts, I have failed to fulfil my objectives (of getting rid of evil characters from my heart, and instead establish good virtues in my inner-self) (**raci upāya paci hāryō**). This seems to be an endless and futile battle for nothing; it is an endless quarrel between the good and the bad for no rhyme or reason, and which has sapped me of my energy, causing unnecessary tension for me, and has drained me of my will-power to fight a protracted battle with evil forces that are beyond my abilities to win (**binu kāranakō kalaha baṛō dukha**).

So that is why, distraught, frustrated and flabbergasted, I have at last decided to openly plead my case before you, and have therefore petitioned you today, because I am unable to cope with this agitation and tension in my heart any longer (**prabhusōm pragaṭi pukāryō**) (5).

[Tell me oh Lord, before whom else could I have narrated my sorrows, miseries and agonies except your Lordship, because—] The Gods are egoist and selfish (**sura svārathī**); they lack necessary power and are unable to offer any help to me (**anīsa**). They are also not competent to tackle this grave issue (**alāyaka**), and are too hard-hearted, arrogant and stubborn to have any empathy or sympathy for me (**niṭhura**). Their mind does not have mercy (because they are ‘selfish’ and ‘egoist’, and would help only those who are destined to succeed even on their own) (**dayā cita nāhīm**)³.

In this situation, pray tell me, where can I go (other than seeking refuge at your holy feet) (**jā'um kahām**)? Who else except you can remove the countless troubles, tribulation and miseries that have swamped me from all sides (for I don't expect any help from any of the gods) (**kō bipati-nivāraka**)? Who can take me across this ocean of mundane world of transmigration (with its huge waves and fast whirlpools of countless problems and unsurmountable troubles) (**bhavatāraka jaga māhīm**) (6).

[³Tulsidas basically says that in this world everyone is driven by self-interest, and the gods are no exception to this rule. The gods need appeasement and offerings in return of extending favours and boons. It is only Lord Ram who is a selfless friend and benefactor for the creature, no matter how lowly and humble the latter may be.

Refer also to (i) verse no. 163, stanza no. 2 of the book Vinai Patrika; and (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 110; Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 47.]

[Therefore, with this solid conviction, this saint says—] Oh Lord, though Tulsidas is wretched, humble and poor and a good-for-nothing fellow (*tulasī jadapi pōca*), but still, after all, he is yours (“*ta'u tumharō*”—i.e. your devotee, dependant and follower), and he does not belong to anyone else (for he has you as his only Lord and Master) (*aura na kāhū kērō*).

[To wit, Tulsidas knows of only ‘one Lord’, and he is ‘you’, oh Lord Ram. Tulsidas is absolutely, unequivocally, irrefutably and unflinchingly loyal to you, and only you, oh Lord Ram. He is devoted to no one else except you.]

Considering this fact that this fellow Tulsidas is one of your ‘own’ (i.e. he is your very own devotee and humble follower), please be kind and gracious enough to lend him the protection and strength of your arms (*dījai bhagati-bāmha bāraka*) so that this village that he tries to establish in his heart in your name can be rehabilitated (*jyōm subasa basai aba khērō*).

[To wit, bless Tulsidas that by the strength of your devotion, worship and affection, good virtues would prosper in his inner-self, and all the vices and evils would be eliminated.] (7).

(151)

जो पै चेराई रामकी करतो न लजातो।
 तौ तू दाम कुदाम ज्यों कर-कर न बिकातो॥1॥
 जपत जीह रघुनाथको नाम नहिं अलसातो।
 बाजीगरके सूम ज्यों खल खेह न खातो॥2॥
 जौ तू मन! मेरे कहे राम-नाम कमातो।
 सीतापति सनमुख सुखी सब ठाँव समातो॥3॥
 राम सोहाते तोहिं जौ तू सबहिं सोहतो।
 काल करम कुल कारनी कोऊ न कोहातो॥4॥
 राम-नाम अनुरागही जिय जो रतिआतो।
 स्वारथ-परमारथ-पथी तोहिं सब पतिआतो॥5॥
 सेइ साधु सुनि समुझि कै पर-पीर पिरातो।
 जनम कोटिको काँदलो हृद-हृदय थिरातो॥6॥
 भव-मग अगम अनंत है, बिनु श्रमहि सिरातो।
 महिमा उलटे नामकी मुनि कियो किरातो॥7॥
 अमर-अगम तनु पाइ सो जड़ जाय न जातो।
 होतो मंगल-मूल तू अनुकूल बिधातो॥8॥
 जो मन, प्रीति-प्रतीतिसों राम-नामहिं रातो।
 तुलसी रामप्रसादसों तिहुँताप न तातो/नसातो॥9॥

(151)

jō pai cērā'ī rāmakī karatō na lajātō.
 tau tū dāma kudāma jyōm kara-kara na bikātō. 1.
 japata jiha raghunāthakō nāma nahim alasātō.
 bājīgarakē sūma jyōm khala khēha na khātō. 2.
 jau tū mana! mērē kahē rāma-nāma kamātō.
 sītāpati sanamukha sukhī saba ṭhāmva samātō. 3.
 rāma sōhātē tōhim jau tū sabahim sōhatō.
 kāla karama kula kāranī kō'ū na kōhātō. 4.
 rāma-nāma anurāgahī jiya jō rati'ātō.
 svāratha-paramāratha-pathī tōhim saba pati'ātō. 5.
 sē'i sādhu suni samujhi kai para-pīra pirātō.
 janama kōṭikō kāmḍalō hada-hṛdaya thirātō. 6.
 bhava-maga agama ananta hai, binu śramahi sirātō.
 mahimā ulaṭē nāmakī muni kiyō kirātō. 7.
 amara-agama tanu pā'i sō jaṛa jāya na jātō.
 hōtō maṅgala-mūla tū, anukūla bidhātō. 8.
 jō mana, prīti-pratītisōm rāma-nāmahim rātō.
 tulasī rāmaprasādasōm tihumṭāpa na tātō/nasātō. 9.

Verse no. 151—[Symbolising admonishing himself and his mind on behalf of all creatures, Tulsidas laments—] ‘Alas, oh Tulsidas! If (jō) you had not felt ashamed at calling yourself a servant (i.e. a faithful and devoted follower) of Lord Sri Ram (jō pai cērā'ī rāmakī karatō na lajātō), you would not have been sold at a discounted value from hand to hand in spite of inherently being of a high value (tau tū dāma kudāma jyōm kara-kara na bikātō)¹.

[¹To wit, in spite of your true self being the same ‘consciousness’ that is known as the Parmatma, you have forgotten who you actually are; you have been ignorant of the nature of your true and divine self, of your divine origin. And as a result of this ignorance and lack of wisdom, you wander in this world as if you were of low birth and surrounded by misfortunes and miseries, one who is always in some want like a lowly person or a hungry beggar who goes from one door to another just to feed his stomach, and is never contented no matter how much he gets. You were born as a Brahmin, and there was no reason why you should have come to such a pitiable condition if you had shown even a trace of spiritual wisdom that is expected from a learned Brahmin.

Oh you fool! You have been wondering from one birth to another and suffering the consequences because of your lack of awareness about your exalted origin and true nature. You behave like an ordinary creature who is always miserable and wretched though you are so high of pedigree and of noble birth because you are lucky to have a close kinship with the Supreme Being in the form of Lord Ram. You have forgotten that you are an image of the supreme Consciousness known as the Parmatma—and this simple error on your part has been the cause of all your miseries and troubles.

In short, the cause of all your worldly problems is that you have distanced yourself from Lord Ram and have forgotten that you have a close relationship with the Lord of the world, and that it being the case there is no reason why you should roam about in such dire straits of wants and miseries. Instead of shying away from calling yourself a devotee, a follower and servant of the Lord, you should have been proud of proclaiming about your relationship with the Lord, for then there would have

been no misery and grief for you. But you are so stupid that you chose to do otherwise.

This verse invokes the eclectic philosophy of the Upanishads that the true identity of a creature is his Atma, which is known as the soul and is pure consciousness personified. Further, this individual's Atma is a microcosmic form of the cosmic Atma known as the Parmatma, or the Supreme and Transcendental Atma which is also known as the Cosmic Consciousness.

The individual creature's Atma is the 'you' here, i.e. it is the enlightened individual who realises this truth who is being addressed in this verse. This Atma is priceless and the most valuable aspect of any living being because it is a micro-form of the Supreme Being. But out of ignorance and worldly delusions, a person forgets the exalted and divine nature of his 'true self', but suffers from miseries and grief because he erroneously begins to treat his gross physical body as his identity. This is what Tulsidas essentially refers to and means here in this verse.] (1).

If your tongue had not been lazy and got tired of chanting, repeating and reciting Lord Sri Ram's holy Name (*japata jīha raghunāthakō nāma nahim alasātō*), then you would not come to such a miserable state that you would have to fill your mouth with dust (symbolising hunger, wants, miseries, sorrows and lowliness in this world) like the way a road side 'bājigara' (a country conjurer, a traditional Tantrik, a maverick player, a country magician who roams around hosting roadside shows to feed his stomach) who fills or stuffs the mouth of his 'sūma' (a wooden toy resembling a man) with indignation if the spectators watching his show fail to give him some money at the end of the show (*bājigarakē sūma jyōm khala khēha na khātō*)².

[²The country magician keeps a tiny wooden toy resembling a man in his bag. If he fails to sufficiently motivate the spectators of his show to give him some money at the end of his roadside performance, he would stick this toy in the ground and pick up some dust from the ground and stuff it in the toy's mouth to symbolise how he would feed himself if he doesn't get enough money. Then he goes around the crowd with a bowl begging for donations, and curses all those who don't give him some money while blessing others who do.

Tulsidas cites this example to say that if a devotee has faith in Lord Ram and chants the Lord's holy Name, there is no reason why he won't get sufficient food to fill his stomach, and would have to survive on leftovers got by begging from door to door like a wretched beggar and vagabond.

It also means that if a devotee takes the shelter of Lord Ram and relies on the power of the Lord's holy Name, there is no reason why he would have to live a miserable life full of pain and grief and wants which is symbolised by his mouth being stuffed with dust instead of having some good food to eat.

The 'mouth being stuffed with dust' is an idiom indicating insult and humiliation at the hand of others. So, a person would surely invite scorn and ridicule from the world at some point of time in his life if he spends his entire time talking of mundane affairs of the world. In the final run this behaviour would never give him much honour and peace.

It also means wasting precious time in worthless gossip and useless talk instead of using the tongue in repeating the holy Name of the Lord which would have a positive implication for the spiritual well-being of the creature.] (2).

Oh my Mana (mind)! If you had listened to my advice and had earned the spiritual wealth symbolised by the jewel known as Lord Sri Ram's holy Name (*jau tū mana!*

mērē kahē rāma-nāma kamātō), you would have not only come close to Lord Sitapati (Lord Ram, the husband of Sita) and feel blessed, happy and joyful thereby, but you would also have got respect and acclaim everywhere in this world. In all sooth, you would have been able to attend to the well-being of your present existence in this life as well as would have secured an excellent future for yourself (sītāpati sanamukha sukhī saba ṭhāmva samātō) (3).

If Lord Sri Ram had appeared pleasing, attractive and charming to you, i.e. if his Holiness had appealed to your mind and heart; if you had been affectionate towards the Lord and had loved him (rāma sōhātē tōhim jau), then you would also have been liked by everybody else in this life (tū sabahim sōhatō).

Kaal (time, circumstances), Karma (the deeds done by you) and Kula (your kith and kin)—the factors that motivate or inspire a man to behave the way he does, or which control all his emotions and sentiments in his life (kāla karama kula kāranī)—none would have been opposed to you; not one of them would have been antagonised with you, and so you need not have bothered about them (kō'ū na kōhātō). Rather, all would have been on friendly terms with you, all would have been favourably inclined towards you, and would have helped you in anyway you would have liked them to³.

[³Tulsidas says that if a person begins to have devotion and love for the Lord God, in this case Lord Ram, then even his most staunch opponents begin to show friendliness to him as all fear that by offending the devotee of the Lord they would invite the Lord's wrath. These three factors, viz. 'Kaal', 'Karma' and 'Kula', tie a person in a firm bond from which he finds himself almost impossible to break free while he is still alive in this world. He has to conform to the demands of the circumstances of life that surround him; he has to obey the law of deeds that states that a person is to bear the consequences of whatever he does, whether it is good or bad, and all his kith and kin in this world expect him to fulfil his obligations towards them, take care of their worldly needs such as provide them with food, shelter, clothing etc. If the person fails to oblige any one or all of these three entities, they wreak vengeance upon him. None of them has any mercy upon the poor creature.

But if the same person has taken shelter with Lord Ram and gets the Lord's protection, these three entities are affright of offending him as they now realise that he has the protection of the Lord Emperor of this world, and is not servile to any one of them. On the contrary, they go out of their way to please the Lord's devotee in the hope that the Lord would be pleased with them.] (4).

If you had had love and devotion for the holy Name of Lord Sri Ram, if you had been sincere in your heart in having devotion for the Lord and had true love for the Lord in it (rāma-nāma anurāgahī jiya jō rati'ātō), then those who are selfish and exploit you for their own vested interests as well as those who are selfless and are interested in your welfare would have had been friendly with you (svāratha-paramāratha-pathī tōhim saba pati'ātō)⁴.

[⁴To wit, oh my mind, if you had had devotion for Lord Ram and had loved his holy Name, then both your worldly interests as well as your spiritual well-being would have been taken care of. You would have been happy in this materialistic world even though you were surrounded by vested interests who are very selfish, and at the same time you would have befriended some noble souls who would have advised you selflessly about your spiritual good and helped you attain success in your

spiritual quest. In the former case, you would have done your duties towards your kith and kin in a dispassionate manner, with your mind remaining firmly rooted in the memory or the thoughts of the Lord. This attitude would have bestowed internal calmness and happiness to you.

At the same time as serving the world and carrying out the duties assigned to you and living unto your responsibilities that you are expected to fulfil, you would also have been motivated to search out and spend some quality time with saints and holy men who loved the Lord, and in their company you would have found more internal peace and joy, thus compounding your sense of happiness and feeling of blessedness that you already had by being non-attached to your deeds and relations in this world earlier.

So, if you had loved Lord Ram and had had devotion for him then even while serving the world and surrounded by selfish interests, it would have been possible for you to remain detached from all worldly bondages, to remain aloof from all things mundane and entangling for the spirit, and thereby remain in a state of perpetual joy and happiness. This blissful state of transcendental existence would elude you, it would not be available to you if you have distanced yourself from the Lord.] (5).

If you had served saintly and pious people, and had felt pity and sorry on hearing the miseries of others (*sē'i sādhu suni samujhi kai para-pīra pirātō*), then the scum which has collected over millions of births in your pond-like heart would have settled at the bottom, and your heart would have become pure (*janama kōṭikō kāmḍalō hada-hṛdaya thirātō*)⁵.

[⁵To wit then, your innerself would have been purified and filled with the distilled water of spiritualism, a water symbolising purity of devotion and affection for the Lord.] (6).

The passage through this mundane, gross and mortal world of transmigration is infinitely difficult, long and tedious (*bhava-maga agama ananta hai*), but you would have easily covered that same path, you would have happily finished your journey in life had you chanted the holy Name of the Lord (*binu śramahi sirātō*)⁶.

When Sri Ram's Name is so potent and effective that by repeating it in the reverse, the savage Valmiki had turned into a renowned sage, what then would not have been possible for you by chanting and repeating it straight (*mahimā ulaṭē nāmakī muni kiyo kirātō*)⁷?

[⁶To wit, those who do not take the shelter of Lord Ram's holy Name have nothing to protect them and give them shade in their journey through the harsh path of life. Such travellers have to cope with the scorch of the heat and all sorts of problems symbolised by the countless torments and tribulations and travails associated with life in this mortal and mundane world. Obviously, this person feels exhausted and weary half way through the journey, and his path through life seems to be an ordeal for him.

On the other hand, those who have taken the shelter of Lord Ram's holy Name have comfort and joy while travelling on the same path like a person who is protected by an umbrella from being scorched by heat of the burning sun overhead during his journey, and a footwear to protect his legs from being lacerated and bled by the thorns, the roughness and the harshness of the path on which he treads. A devotee thus feels lucky that he had chosen to prepare well in advance before embarking upon the journey of life by seeking the shelter of Lord Ram and his holy Name which acts as a soothing balm for him.

⁷Valmiki was a hunter, and he was so sinful that when the celestial sages Sankadi advised him to repent for his sins and seek liberation for himself by repeating the holy Name “RAMA” of the Lord, he refused that it is not possible for him to do so. The sages were wise, and they advised Valmiki to repeat the Lord’s holy Name in the reverse order—viz. “MARA”. When repeated, the word “MARA” becomes similar to “RAMA”. So, even without his being aware, Valmiki was repeating the Lord’s holy Name. It had its good effect upon him, and he was able to overcome the evil effects of his past sins. The same wicked hunter now became an acclaimed and revered sage by the name of Valmiki, the sage who was visited by Lord Ram himself during his journey through the forest, and who was the first sage to have composed the great epic known as Ramayan which tells the divine story of Lord Ram. This incident is mentioned in Tulsidas’ epic narration of this divine story in his book Ram Charit Manas, in its Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19, and in another book titled ‘Geetawali’, in its Sundar Kand, verse no. 40, stanza no. 3. Refer also to verse no. 57, stanza no. 3 of ‘Vinai Patrika’.

Tulsidas emphasises the power of Lord Ram’s holy Name here. What he stresses is that if this name is so powerful and effective that it can turn a savage hunter into a holy man by being used in an very odd way because Valmiki had repeated it in the reverse order, which is like turning it upside down on its head and kind of showing disrespect to it, then one can imagine its marvellous purifying effects if it is used in the proper way, in the correct and prescribed fashion.] (7).

Oh you stupid wretch of a fellow (jara)! You wouldn't have wasted this human body, which is even rare for the Gods to adopt, in futility and in vain if you had been wise enough to spend your valuable life in the service of Lord Ram, if you had developed devotion for the Lord, and if you had ensured for your spiritual welfare by repeating the holy Name of the Lord; but no, you didn't care for your own good and happiness (amara-agama tanu pā'i sō jāya na jātō)⁸.

Had you done so, you would have been a root of welfare and auspiciousness, and the creator would have become favourable and benign towards you (but now unfortunately you find yourself wallowing in miseries and torments of all kinds) (hōtō maṅgala-mūla tū, anukūla bidhātō).

[⁸The rarity of the human body and the need to use it properly has been repeatedly stressed in Vinai Patrika at a number of places. Some of the instances are verse nos. 83-84, 102, 130, 135/1, 194, 198-202 etc.] (8).

Oh my Mana! If you had attached yourself to Lord Sri Ram's divine and holy Name with due love, devotion, faith and conviction (jō mana, prīti-pratītisōm rāma-nāmahim rātō), then oh Tulsidas, you would never have burnt in the three tormenting fires known as ‘Traitaps’ that scorch all creatures in this world (tulasī rāmaprasādasōm tihumtāpa na tātō/nasātō). [To wit, you would have been able to destroy all the causes that have resulted in so much pain and misery for you.]⁹.

[⁹The three worldly torments are known as Adhyatmik, Adhibhautik and Adidaivik. Rarely a creature free from the sufferings inflicted by them.] (9).

(155)

बिस्वास एक राम—नामको ।
मानत नहिं परतीति अनत ऐसोइ सुभाव मन बामको ।।1।।
पढ़िबो पश्यो न छठी छ मत रिगु जजुर अथर्वन सामको ।
व्रत तीरथ तप सुनि सहमत पचि मरै करै तन छाम को? ।।2।।
करम—जाल कलिकाल कठिन आधीन सुसाधित दामको ।
ग्यान बिराग जोग जप तप, भय लोभ मोह कोह कामको ।।3।।
सब दिन सब लायक भव गायक रघुनायक गुन—ग्रामको ।
बैठे नाम—कामतरु—तर डर कौन घोर घन घामको ।।4।।
को जानै को जैहे जमपुर को सुरपुर पर—धामको ।
तुलसिहिं बहुत भलो लागत जग जीवन रामगुलामको ।।5।।

(155)

bisvāsa ēka rāma-nāmakō.

mānata nahim̐ paratīti anata aisō'i subhāva mana bāmakō. 1.
paḍhibō paryō na chaṭhī cha mata rigu jajura atharvana sāmakō.
brata tīratha tapa suni sahamata paci marai karai tana chāma kō?. 2.
karama-jāla kalikāla kaṭhina ādhīna susādhita dāmakō.
gyāna birāga jōga japa tapa, bhaya lōbha mōha kōha kāmakō. 3.
saba dina saba lāyaka bhava gāyaka raghunāyaka guna-grāmakō.
baiṭhē nāma-kāmataru-tara ḍara kauna ghōra ghana ghāmakō. 4.
kō jānai kō jaiḥē jamapura kō surapura para-dhāmakō.
tulasihiṁ bahuta bhalō lāgata jaga jīvana rāmagulāmakō. 5.

Verse no. 155—I have only one belief, only one faith and only one reliance—and it is in the holy Name of Lord Ram (bisvāsa ēka rāma-nāmakō). [To wit, I believe in nothing else but Lord Ram's holy Name; I have no faith in anything else except Lord Ram's holy Name; I rely on nothing but Lord Ram's holy Name. I am unequivocal in my beliefs and convictions. It is my only religion, and it is the result of all my observations.]

I declare that my Mana (mind and heart combine), which may be wretched, wicked, crooked and perverse, has howbeit made this firm resolution in this respect (as stated herein above), and it won't change its determination in any way for it doesn't have any confidence and reliance on any other entity for its good and welfare (except in the holy Name of the Lord) (mānata nahim̐ paratīti anata aisō'i subhāva mana bāmakō). [To wit, though my Mana is otherwise dumb, fickle, wicked, evil, corrupt and pervert, but I praise it that it has taken one good and wise decision—and it is to firmly resolve that its only good and welfare lies in having faith in Lord Ram and his holy Name. I congratulate my Mana for it!]

Study of the six Shastras (branches of the scriptures such as Nyaya, Vaishesik, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimansa, Vedant), and the four Vedas (primary scriptures) such as Rig, Yajur, Atharva and Sam is not destined in my destiny (i.e. I am not fortunate enough to have ever got a chance to read or study them) (paḍhibō paryō na chaṭhī cha mata rigu jajura atharvana sāmakō), and my Mana is filled with fear and

recoils when it even hears of such words as ‘fastings, penances, religious vows and rituals, austerities, pilgrimage’ etc. (*brata tīratha tapa suni sahamata*).

Who would die (i.e. suffer) by going through the rigours of these tough spiritual paths for whatever religious merit they purport to have, and spoil one's body (i.e. subjecting the body to hardships) by practicing their strict discipline, following their rigorous methods, and conforming to their stiff demands (with the threat of punishment and sufferings for failure to do so) (*paci marai karai tana chāma kō*)?¹

[¹To wit, I am so illiterate and dumb that neither have I studied any book nor have I practiced any meritorious deed in my life. In fact, I am scared stiff of even thinking of such virtuous deeds as doing penances, fasting, keeping of vows, doing religious rituals, and so on, what to say of actually doing them.

I abhor them; I am too lazy to do them. I have observed that all these paths are so rigorous and difficult that if I follow them then I will lose all the chances of enjoying the comforts, pleasures and joys of the world that I am accustomed to. Then there is no certainty of success. So I decided not to take the trouble at all.

I looked around and pondered on this matter for quite a while, and determined for myself that there is yet a very simple and easy path that I can follow, a path which would give me the same rewards or fruits that I can get by subjecting myself to the rigours and troubles that are incumbent in following the meritorious paths listed herein above. And this easy and the least troubling path was to have devotion and love for Lord Ram with a firm faith in the Lord's holy Name—as this single path provides great spiritual rewards in all its glorious forms with any accompanying hassles.] (2).

In Kaliyug (the present age), doing meritorious deeds (such as Vedic rituals, fire and other religious sacrifices, giving charities and making donations, and other such meritorious deeds of religious nature) are like a complicated tangle as they are not only difficult to carry out with the limited resources one has but are also costly as they involve a lot of expenditure (*karama-jāla kalikāla kaṭhina ādhīna susādhita dāmakō*). [Unfortunately, I do not have such kind of surplus money that I can afford to bear such huge expenditure. So therefore, I am unable to do any kind of so-called ‘Karma Kand’.]

Now as for the rest of the means and ways for attaining religious merit and spiritual reward—such as the path that requires Gyan (gaining truthful knowledge about spiritual matters), practicing of Vairagya (renunciation), of Yoga (meditation), of Japa (chanting of the Mantras), of Tapa (penances and austerities) etc. (*gyāna birāga jōga japa tapa*)—there is the constant fear that the effort invested into realising success through these paths would be subjected to interference and disruption from such negative factors as Kaam (lust, desires, passions), Krodha (anger that leads to malice, discord and ill-will), Lobha (greed, avarice, covetousness), Moha (attachments, infatuation, a sense of belonging to perishable things) etc. (*bhaya lōbha mōha kōha kāmākō*)².

[²Tulsidas avers that the many well-known paths that are usually prescribed by the scriptures for spiritual aspirants and seekers of bliss, happiness, peace, liberation, deliverance, emancipation, salvation and so on as listed in this verse are closed for him. He neither has the money nor the wherewithal to arrange for things needed for doing elaborate fire sacrifices and make charities that are part of this ritual, not is he fit and able to do other meritorious deeds such as having Vairagya, doing Yoga, Tapa, Japa etc.

Hence, for all practical purposes, these paths, no matter how glorious they may be, are closed for him.] (3).

Verily and in all sooth and without the least gainsay, in this mundane gross world of transmigration and its accompanying sufferings and pains, those who sing the divine stories and glories of Lord Sri Ram every day are the ones who are to be regarded as clever and wise in every possible way (*saba dina saba lāyaka bhava gāyaka raghunāyaka guna-grāmakō*). [To wit, those who sing the glories of the Lord, those who have surrendered themselves to the Lord and have faith in him, they are the ones who are really wise and clever in this world—because they achieve their spiritual goals with the least effort, they do so most easily and conveniently, without exposing themselves to any botherations and hardships, and without the fear of failure and uncertainties.]

Those who are sitting under the shadow of the Kalpa-Tree (the all wish-fulfilling tree of heaven) symbolised by Lord Ram's holy Name (*baiṭhē nāma-kāmatara-tara*)—say, how and why should they be afraid of the huge dark clouds swirling over their heads, or of the harshness and glare of the rays of the sun that sizzles the world around them (*ḍara kauna ghōra ghana ghāmakō*)?³

[³Here, the ‘dark cloud’ represents the darkness induced by ignorance, delusions, sins, vices etc. that torment a creature and act as spoil-sport in his spiritual path, pulling him down, making him stumble and get hurt, and ruining whatever efforts he may have made to attain lasting peace and happiness for himself.

The ‘harsh and dazzling sunlight’ refers to the countless charms and temptations arising from the material things and sense objects in this mundane gross world that seem so attractive but are ruinous for him in the long run. One sees water in the mirage formed in a desert under the glare the dazzling sun, and he is tempted to run for this water to quench his thirst. But this temptation leads to more misery as the heat of the desert saps the person of whatever energy he might have still left in him, bringing his ruin and death closer.

But for those who have taken the ‘shelter’ of Lord Ram’s holy Name, it is like standing under the protective shade of a huge, ever-green, fruit bearing tree with thick foliage and an extensive network of large branches. Such a man is protected from harsh weather—be it the thunder and lightening caused by fierce clouds overhead, or the heat caused by the harsh sun. Verily, the devotee of Lord Ram is free from all fears arising from any torment of the world; the torments and sins keep away from him.] (4).

Who knows who would go to hell or to heaven, or attain the supreme abode of the soul from where there is no return (i.e. attain emancipation and salvation for themselves and become one with the supreme, absolute, formless cosmic Soul known as the Parmatma) (*kō jānai kō jaiḥ jamapura kō surapura para-dhāmakō*)?

Tulsidas says that as far as he is concerned he is not bothered with this debate, and would rather prefer to live in this world as a slave (i.e. an ardent, selfless, faithful and loyal devotee) of Lord Sri Ram, spending his time in ecstasy by serving, praying to, remembering, worshiping and honouring his beloved Lord, and singing his glories and praising him to the best of his abilities (*tulasihiṁ bahuta bhalō lāgata jaga jīvana rāmagulāmakō*)⁴.

[⁴The message is clear. Tulsidas says that no one is certain what would happen after death, whether one would suffer by going to hell, or enjoy heaven, or even find beatitude and felicity by obtaining emancipation and salvation. If something is so uncertain, no wise person would bet on it. It is far better and sensible to opt of a

choice where happiness and joy is obtainable in practical terms in the present world and real time. And the only way to achieve it is to take the path of Bhakti, the spiritual path of devotion, surrender, worship, love and affection for the Lord God. The easiest and simplest way to follow this path is to take recourse to the Lord's holy Name as it is without any frills, complications, compulsions and formalities. Another parallel path that runs alongside it is to sing the glories of the Lord and remember him at all times of the day and night. These twin methods are the two sides of the same path, and they lead one to ecstasy and joy. Is it not wise to enjoy life and be happy right here while one lives in it rather than risk making sacrifices and suffer for an uncertain future no one knows anything about?] (5).

(156)

कलि नाम कामतरु रामको ।
दलनिहार दारिद दुकाल दुख, दोष घोर घन घामको ।।1।।
नाम लेत दाहिनो होत मन, बाम बिधाता बामको ।
कहत मुनीस महेस महातम, उलटे सूधे नामको ।।2।।
भलो लोक-परलोक तासु जाके बल ललित-ललामको ।
तुलसी जग जानियत नामते सोच न कूच मुकामको ।।3।।

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kali nāma kāmataru rāmakō.
dalanihāra dārida dukāla dukha, dōṣa ghōra ghana ghāmakō. 1.
nāma lēta dāhinō hōta mana, bāma bidhātā bāmakō.
kahata munīsa mahēsa mahātama, ulaṭē sūdhē nāmakō. 2.
bhalō lōka-paralōka tāsū jākē bala lalita-lalāmakō.
tulasī jaga jāniyata nāmatē sōca na kūca mukāmakō. 3.

Verse no. 156—In Kaliyug (the present age), Lord Sri Ram's holy Name is like the only all wish-fulfilling tree known as the 'kāmataru'¹ (kali nāma kāmataru rāmakō). It is because it helps one (i.e. the devotee) to overcome countless problems, miseries and pains associated with worldly existence that are like the torments caused by poverty, famine and drought (dalanihāra dārida dukāla dukha), or the sufferance caused to a person due to his own faults, shortcomings, evil nature and sins that scorch him like the heat of a blazing summer sun (dōṣa ghōra ghana ghāmakō)².

[¹This 'Kaam Taru' is a tree in the heaven and is said to fulfil all wishes of the worshipper.

²Tulsidas means that if a person takes the shelter of Lord Ram's holy Name, he would be freed from all worldly torments and miseries that rob him of his mental peace. Forsooth, the Lord's holy Name acts as a soothing balm for his agitated and ruffled spirit, and calms him down. It is like one finding shade under a huge tree after suffering for a lot under the heat of the blazing sun during the summer.] (1).

As soon as one takes the holy Name of Lord Sri Ram, even a stern Creator's malevolent mind that had so far not thought of anything good for that person would immediately become friendly, benign and favourably inclined towards him (and start thinking for his good and welfare) (nāma lēta dāhinō hōta mana, bāma bidhātā bāmakō)³.

The Lord's holy Name is so unique and outstanding in its wonderful and magical spiritual powers that it has produced astounding spiritual results whether it is said in the right order or in the wrong order, i.e. whether it is repeated forwards or backwards (ulaṭē sūdhē nāmakō). [To wit, when the holy Name "RAAM" is repeated over and over again, the result is that it sounds the same to the hearer as it forms a continuous flow of sound waves that merges both ends of the word into one single whole. It is like a wheel or a circle that has neither a beginning nor an end unlike a straight line that would start at a point and end at a point.]

For instance, sage Valmiki has established the glories and mystical powers of Lord Sri Ram's holy Name by repeating it in the reverse order (as 'Ma' followed by 'Ra'), while Shiva has established the magnificence and the stupendous mystical powers of the same holy Name of the Lord by repeating it in the correct order (as 'Ra' followed by 'Ma') (kahata munīsa mahēsa mahātama)⁴.

[³It means that the Creator who decides the fate and destiny of a creature would be compelled to rethink what to decide about the latter's future if the creature takes the shelter of the protective umbrella of Lord Ram's holy Name so much so that even if previously he had been condemned by the Creator to suffer in his life, the course of life would change for good for him once he is blessed by the grace flowing naturally from the holy Name of Lord Ram.

⁴Valmiki had achieved sainthood by chanting the holy Name of Lord Ram in the reverse order—because he was so sinful and vile that he refused to pronounce the Lord's Name in the proper way. But nevertheless, the holy Name's stupendous good effect was given to him though he had repeated it in the reverse order. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19.

Lord Shiva drank the fearsome poison that emerged at the time of the churning of the ocean by the gods and the demons on the strength of Sri Ram's holy Name, and instead of dying from this horrible poison that was extremely harsh and scorching, he became an exalted and venerated Great God in this creation who is honoured by the epithet 'Mahadeva' (which literally means a 'Great God'). Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. that precedes Doha no. 19.] (2).

Verily and in all sooth and without gainsay in the least, it is certain that those who have the support and the strength and the protection of Lord Sri Ram's powerful and glorious holy Name, which has wonderful and extraordinary spiritual and temporal potentials, are assured of lasting happiness and joy both in this world (as long as they live) and in the world hereinafter (after they have left their mortal coils and died (bhalō lōka-paralōka tāsū jākē bala lalita-lalāmakō)⁵.

[⁵To wit, those who take the shelter and refuge of the holy Name of Lord Ram can be reassured of sustained happiness and joy in this world as long as they live, and after their death they can be equally assured of eternal peace and emancipation for their soul.]

Oh Tulsidas! It is such a wonderful thought, and an extremely reassuring one at that, that by having the strength and support of Lord Sri Ram's holy Name one would neither have any kind of fear or worry in leaving this world (i.e. in dying, which usually one is terrified of because of the horrors associated with the process of dying and the fate after that), nor of staying in this world (and facing its seemingly unsurmountable problems, because these problems would not harm him once he has got the Lord's support and protection) (*tulasī jaga jāniyata nāmatē sōca na kūca mukāmakō*)⁶.

[⁶To wit, for a person who has taken shelter and refuge with Lord Ram and obtained the protection of the Lord's holy Name, it makes no difference to him in what circumstance he lives or would have to face in the future, because he is promised and reassured of happiness, joy, peace and liberation from worries and pain both in this world as well as in the world hereinafter. For such a blessed person, living and dying makes no difference because he gets to be established in supreme bliss, and his 'true self' becomes unaware of his surroundings, his body, or the 'false self', which is the one that experiences and pains associated with the gross mundane world.] (3).

(173)

नाहिंन आवत आन भरोसो
यहि कलिकाल सकल साधनतरु है श्रम-फलनि फरो सो ॥1॥
तप, तीरथ, उपवास, दान, मख जेहि जो रुचै करौ सो ।
पायेहि पै जानिबो करम-फल भरि भरि बेद परोसो ॥2॥
आगम-बिधि जप-जाग करत नर सरत न काज खरो सो ।
सुख सपनेहु न जोग-सिधि-साधन, रोग बियोग धरो सो ॥3॥
काम, क्रोध, मद, लोभ, मोह मिलि ग्यान बिराग हरो सो ।
बिगरत मन संन्यास लेत जल नावत आम घरो सो ॥4॥
बहु मत मुनि बहु पंथ पुराननि जहाँ-तहाँ झगरो सो ।
गुरु कह्यो राम-भजन नीको मोहिं लगत राज-डगरो सो ॥5॥
तुलसि बिनु परतीति प्रीति फिरि-फिरि पचि मरै मरो सो ।
रामनाम-बोहित भव-सागर चाहै तरन तरो सो ॥6॥

(173)

nāhinna āvata āna bharōsō
yahi kalikāla sakala sādhanataru hai śrama-phalani pharō sō. 1.
tapa, tīratha, upavāsa, dāna, makha jēhi jō rucai karau sō.
pāyēhi pai jānibō karama-phala bhari bhari bēda parōsō. 2.
āgama-bidhi japa-jāga karata nara sarata na kāja kharō sō.
sukha sapanēhu na jōga-sidhi-sādhana, rōga biyōga dharō sō. 3.
kāma, krōdha, mada, lōbha, mōha mili gyāna birāga harō sō.
bigarata mana sann'yāsa lēta jala nāvata āma gharō sō. 4.
bahu mata muni bahu pantha purānani jahām'tahām'jhagarō sō.
guru kahyō rāma-bhajana nīkō mōhim lagata rāja-ḍagarō sō. 5.

tulasi binu paratīti prīti phiri-phiri paci marai marō sō.
rāmanāma-bōhita bhava-sāgara cāhai tarana tarō sō. 6.

Verse no. 173—I don't have any faith and I can't rely on any other means (for attaining liberation and deliverance for myself, for getting freedom from all the spiritual shackles that have tied me to this world and its endless cycle of misery and grief) (nāhinna āvata āna bharōsō).

In this age known as 'Kaliyug', all the trees representing various means and paths that are called Sadhans (by which a person can attain freedom from his worldly miseries as well as obtain spiritual liberation, deliverance, emancipation, salvation) (yahi kalikāla sakala sādhanataru hai), appear to bear fruits only after investing a lot of labour, making a lot of efforts and doing many tough and arduous deeds (śrama-phalani pharō sō)¹.

[¹To wit, there are numerous paths shown by the scriptures by following which one can reach his desired spiritual goal, and get peace and happiness in his life. But it is easy said than done, as all the means shown are so difficult and full of hurdles that rarely a person can do them properly, rarely can he meet their stringent standards and demands. So failure is the norm. It then turns out to be sour grapes because inspite of striving hard a person finds it well nigh impossible to reach his target. No matter how diligent a person may be, desired fruits always elude him and all his efforts go down the drain.

Now, in the following stanzas outline the various means by which religious merit can be accumulated, but it will be observed that all of them require effort, money, time, action and doing of deeds with a lot of labour involved on the part of a spiritual aspirant.] (1).

Penances and austerities (tapa), pilgrimage (tīratha), religious vows and fastings (upavāsa), charity (dāna), Yagyas (fire and other religious sacrifices—"makha") etc.—let anyone do whatever suits him (jēhi jō rucai karau sō), but the fruits (or the results) of all the above meritorious means (which involve a lot of effort, sacrifice, money and labour) can be seen or tasted only when they mature and fructify (pāyēhi pai jānibō karama-phala), though the Vedas have offered bountifuls of these rewards (bhari bhari bēda parōsō)².

[²All the meritorious deeds outlined here do yield the desired result as promised by the scriptures but only when they are done properly and fully, something which is almost impossible to implement in this present world. Thus, though all these spiritual paths and auspicious deeds are praised immensely by the Vedas, but their actual implementation and practice is so arduous and cumbersome that a big question mark is raised as to their effectiveness. There are so many untold problems in one's life that act as a source of constant interference and hindrance that success in any of these exercises is a big concern in this present corrupt age called Kaliyug. Hence, the expected 'fruit' or religious merit always eludes the seeker.] (2).

People do penances, practice austerities and chant the holy Mantras (japa-jāga karata nara) according to the sanctioned methods (as prescribed by the Vedas—"āgama-bidhi"), yet the real objective is still elusive for them (sarata na kāja kharō sō).

There is no comfort or happiness in trying to attain success by the rigorous path of Yoga (various meditative processes) (sukha sapanēhu na jōga-sidhi-

sādhana), because there is a lack of proper guidance and teachers besides the fear of the practitioner facing various diseases as well as the frustration and agony that accompanies failure (rōga biyōga dharō sō)³.

[³To wit, the harsh realities of Yoga makes the body weakened and diseased, which makes one burdensome on one's family and his own life turns out to be a source of annoyance for him. In the absence of proper guidance, Yoga proves more dangerous than being beneficial for the practitioner.] (3).

The vicious combination of 'kāma' (lust, passions, desires), 'krōdha' (anger, vengeance, indignance), 'mada' (arrogance, haughtiness, ego, pride, vanity), 'lōbha' (greed, avarice, rapacity), 'mōha' (delusions and attachments) have all joined hands (mili) to almost abduct or decimate the virtues of knowledge, wisdom, discrimination and renunciation (gyāna birāga harō sō), while 'Sanyas' (mendicant, austere life; renunciation of the household life and living like a recluse and ascetic) makes the mind as unclean, corrupt and polluted as water poured in an earthen pot which has not been hard-baked (because the mud/earth dissolves in the water, making it turbid and polluted) (bigarata mana sann'yāsa lēta jala nāvata āma gharō sō)⁴.

[⁴No matter how hard a person tries to progress on his spiritual mission and attain his goal in life by being auspicious, righteous and meritorious, yet the vices listed herein are so overbearing and strong that they defeat all his efforts.

The worst part is that if he tries to force himself into practicing 'Sanyas' or renunciation, the mind begins to lust more and more for all those things that he tries to give up. He feels that he is the worse for having taken to Sanyas though externally he may appear to be practicing it.] (4).

There are six Darshans (school of philosophy) enunciated by various sages (bahu mata muni)⁵, and there appears to be a lot of confusion, doubt and discord everywhere (jahām'tahām' jhagarō sō) since the Purans (ancient scriptures) have laid down myriads of paths, ways and means (bahu pantha purānani) which are so different from one another that they cause more discord and dilemma than removing them⁶.

My Guru (teacher) has prescribed devotion and love for Lord Sri Ram and his holy Name as being the simplest and the best path suited for me (according to my temperment, bearing and intellectual development—"guru kahyō rāma-bhajana"), and I also like it (nīkō) as it is a straightforward, uncomplicated, easy and even avenue or path for me (mōhim lagata rāja-ḍagarō sō) by which I can reach my destination in the easiest possible way without humps and bumps to obstruct my path.

[⁵The 6 schools of philosophy are:- Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra, Jaimini's Purva Mimansa, Badaryan's Uttar Mimansa, Gautam's Nyaya, Kanad's Vaisheshik, and Kapil's Sankhya Shastra.

⁶Refer also to verse nos. 139, 184, 194 (3), and 195 (2) of the book Vinai Patrika in the context of the degradations, perversities and turpitudes of Kaliyug, the virtual impossibility to adhere to goodness, and the negation and decimation of all good virtues during this era. The horrors of Kaliyug are also narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 97—to Chanda line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 102.] (5).

Oh Tulsi! Those who want to crush themselves to death (*marai*) under the burden of all the Sadhans described above instead of having devotion, love and faith in Lord Ram (*binu paratīti prīti*), and thereby remain endlessly trapped in this world of transmigration (*phiri-phiri paci marai*), let them do what they want (*marai marō sō*), but I can assert that Lord Ram's holy Name is like a strong ship (*rāmanāma-bōhita*) by which one can easily, surely and comfortably get across this vast ocean symbolised by the world of transmigration with all its attendant horrors. So anyone who wishes to go across this ocean should get on this 'ship' and sail happily across (*bhava-sāgara cāhai tarana tarō sō*)⁷.

[⁷Here, Lord Ram's holy Name is likened to a robust ship which takes a passenger across the ocean comfortably and without any worry. The 'ocean' here is the world of transmigration, known as the Bhava Sagar.

In short, Tulsidas avers that there are myriads of paths, and all are effective—but they are so difficult to implement that success is impractical to obtain. The easiest and most convenient path is Lord Sri Ram's holy Name and having devotion for the Lord.] (6).

(184)

राम—नामके जपे जाइ जियकी जरनि ।
 कलिकाल अपर उपाय ते अपाय भये,
 जैसे तम नासिबेको चित्रके तरनि ॥1॥
 करम—कलाप परिताप पाप—साने सब,
 ज्यों सुफूल फूले तरु फोकट फरनि ।
 दंभ, लोभ, लालच, उपासना बिनासि नीके,
 सुगति साधन भई उदर भरनि ॥2॥
 जोग न समाधि निरुपाधि न बिराग—ग्यान,
 बचन बिसेष बेष, कहूँ न करनि ।
 कपट कुपथ कोटि, कहनि—रहनि खोटि,
 सकल सराहैं निज निज आचरनि ॥3॥
 मरत महेस उपदेस हैं कहा करत,
 सुरसरि—तीर कासी धरम—धरनि ।
 राम—नामको प्रताप हर कहैं, जपैं आप,
 जुग जुग जानैं जग, बेदहूँ बरनि ॥4॥
 मति राम—नाम ही सों, रति राम—नाम ही सों,
 गति राम—नाम ही की बिपति—हरनि ।
 राम—नामसों प्रतीति प्रीति राखे कबहुँक,
 तुलसी ढरैंगे राम आपनी ढरनि ॥5॥

(184)

rāma-nāmakē japē jā'i jiyakī jarani.
 kalikāla apara upāya tē apāya bhayē,
 jaisē tama nāsibēkō citrakē tarani. 1.
 karama-kalāpa paritāpa pāpa-sānē saba,

jyōm suphūla phūlē taru phōkaṭa pharani.
 dambha, lōbha, lālaca, upāsanā bināsi nīkē,
 sugati sādhana bhaī udara bharani. 2.
 jōga na samādhi nirupādhi na birāga-gyāna,
 bacana bisēṣa bēṣa, kahūṁ na karani.
 kapaṭa kupatha kōṭi, kahani-rahani khōṭi,
 sakala sarāhairṁ nija nija ācarani. 3.
 marata mahēsa upadēsa hairṁ kahā karata,
 surasari-tīra kāsī dharama-dharani.
 rāma-nāmakō pratāpa hara kahairṁ, japairṁ āpa,
 juga juga jānairṁ jaga, bēdahūṁ barani. 4.
 mati rāma-nāma hī sōm, rati rāma-nāma hī sōm,
 gati rāma-nāma hī kī bipati-harani.
 rāma-nāmasōm pratīti prīti rākhē kabahumka,
 tulasī ḍharaiṅgē rāma āpanī ḍharani. 5.

Verse no. 184—The ‘heart-burns’ (“jīyakī jarani”) that represent internal agonies, agitations and torments of the mind and the heart caused by innumerable sorrows, miseries and worries as well as the countless confusions, bewilderments and discords created by living in this mundane gross world are all removed by constantly repeating Sri Ram’s holy Name (rāma-nāmakē japē jā’i—jīyakī jarani).

During this age known as Kaliyug, all other means, ways and paths (that can help a person free himself from this hear-burn and ensure his salvation and deliverance from worldly bondages) are all as useless and futile (*kalikāla apara upāya tē apāya bhayē*) as trying to get over from the fearful effects of darkness by expecting light from the painting of an image of the illuminated sun on a wall (*jaisē tama nāsibēkō citrakē tarani*)¹.

[¹To wit, even as it is impossible and impractical to remove the gloom of darkness in a room by expecting the painting of the sun on a wall to give enough light to do so, it is likewise not feasible to achieve one’s spiritual goal in life and obtain peace by taking recourse to the many paths prescribed by the scriptures for this purpose. Some of these paths are Yoga or meditation, Dhyan or contemplation, Yagya or doing sacrifices, Vrat or keeping religious vows and fasting, Tirtha or going to pilgrimages, Gyan or acquisition of true spiritual knowledge, and so on and so forth.

So what is the sure-hit way? Well, it is to take the boat of Lord Ram’s holy Name if one wishes to comfortably and surely cross over this vast ocean symbolised by the numerous miseries and torments associated with life in this gross mundane world, and free one’s soul from the horrifying sufferings experienced by it if one remains trapped in the cycle of transmigration.] (1).

Though the deeds and activities that a person does in the present age are numerous (*karama-kalāpa*) but they are all tainted, smeared and soiled by the numerous negative factors such as the countless sins and evil tendencies that dominate life in this world (*pāpa-sānē saba*), and as a result these deeds and actions are overwhelmed by sorrows, miseries and torments (*paritāpa*)².

[²To wit, though it is therotically possible to achieve one’s spititual aim by doing the right sorts of deeds, engaging in the righteous and noble activities, and taking the correct action that would enable a seeker achieve success in his endeavours,

but in practice it becomes impossible to implement this theory because of the so many overbearing problems associated with life in today's world which is dominated by negative factors. It becomes almost impossible to be pious, righteous, auspicious and noble in the face of stiff opposition by the onslaught of sins, vices and evils as well as the overpowering temptations of the sense objects of the world that are the domineering factors in life nowadays.]

Forsooth, it is a fact that doing what is correct, auspicious, righteous and noble nowadays (and expecting good results from such deeds) is like a tree that shows beautiful flowers but lacks any succulent fruit (jyōm̐ suphūla phūlē taru phōkaṭa pharani)³.

[³To wit, the deeds that a even a conscientious person does look so nice on their face, but they fail to yield expected spiritual results much like a tree that looks so attractive from a distance because it has so many nice flowers on its branches, but when one examines it closely it has no fruit to offer which can feed his hungry stomach. After all, the real value of a tree lies in its abilities to offer fruits, because flowers are only for decorative purposes but they do not provide nourishment to a hungry person who needs food more urgently than mere useless pampering by fragrances and colours.]

Verily indeed, deceit, fraud, heresy, falsehood, hyprocrisy, greed, avarice, wistful desires, yearnings etc. (dambha, lōbha, lālaca) have completely destroyed and nullified whatever devotion, worship and service that one does to attain his spiritual goal (upāsanā bināsi nīkē).

What's more, the time-honoured method of acquisition of truthful knowledge known as 'Gyan' (that would eliminate all the spiritual darkness cast by delusions and ignorance) is now being misused to feed one's stomach and as a means of livelihood instead of using it for the good purpose for which it is actually meant, i.e. to learn the secrets of life, to attain peace and happiness, and to achieve liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of the soul (sugati sādhanā bhaī udara bharani).

[To wit, Karma, Upasana and Gyan are in a horrible, pitiable and most miserable state. See the next stanza.] (2).

[It's a sorry and pitiable state of affairs.] Yoga (meditation, concentration on the Lord) is not possible to practice (because it is too cumbersome and difficult to do), Samadhi (a trance-like state when one loses consciousness of his surroundings; a state of transcendental existence generally achieved by experienced and attained ascetics) is also not without free from so many hindrances (both mental and physical) so much so that it is rare to achieve this state in its pure form, while Vairagya (renunciation, dispassion), Gyan (wisdom and knowledge) are limited to being used for mere boast, show, pomp, pretensions and disguise (jōga na samādhi nirupādhi na birāga-gyāna).

There is only loud talking and boastful claims about these auspicious activities but no commensurate actions to back them up, and external behaviour of piousness and holiness that is misleading (bacana bisēṣa bēṣa, kahūṁ na karani).

Countless forms of deceit, conceit, pretensions, heresies, heterodoxy, false doctrines have become rampant (kapaṭa kupatha kōṭi); speech, actions and deeds have all become extremely corrupt and spoilt (kahani-rahani khōṭi).

Everyone claims that his thoughts, believes, what he says and does, how he behaves and acts, are the best of all, and the rest are nonsense and wrong (*sakala sarāhairṁ nija ācarani*). (3)

[Now, in this agonising state of affairs, there is still one hope left. And what is it?]

What does Lord Shiva preach to a dying creature (*marata mahēsa upadēsa haim kahā karata*) on the banks of river Ganges in the holy land of Kashi (Varanasi) (*surasari-tīra kāsī dharama-dharani*)? Well, the answer is this: The Lord praises the glory, the importance and the significance of the holy Name of Lord Sri Ram as the one divine formula that provides liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the soul of a creature (*rāma-nāmakō pratāpa hara kahaim*).

Verily indeed and in all sooth, Lord Shiva not only preaches this divine formula to others but practices it himself by constantly repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram (*hara kahaim, japaim āpa*).

The whole world knows this from time immemorial (*juga juga jānaim jaga*), and the Vedas (ancient scriptures) too have also been unequivocally endorsing this fact from the beginning (*bēdahūṁ barani*).

Now, therefore, one should apply one's mind and start concentrating one's thoughts on nothing else but the holy Name of Lord Sri Ram (*mati rāma-nāma hī sōṁ*), have faith, love and devotion for nothing else but the holy Name of Lord Sri Ram (*rati rāma-nāma hī sōṁ*), and take refuge and shelter nowhere else except in the holy Name of Lord Sri Ram (*gati rāma-nāma hī kī*)—because this is the only easy mean, the only sure way and the only path of certainty that can not only remove the many torments, miseries and troubles arising from life in the cycle of birth and death in which the helpless creature finds himself trapped, but also free him from this trap (*bipati-harani*).

Oh Tulsidas (*tulasī*)! If you consistently persist in keeping faith and having love and devotion for the Lord (*rāma-nāmasōṁ pratīti prīti rākhē*), then sooner or later some day (*kabahūṁka*) the compassionate, merciful, benevolent and kind Lord Sri Ram would surely show his grace upon you due to his inherent nature, his habit of being kind, compassionate and merciful to all (*ḍharaiṅgē rāma āpanī ḍharani*) (5).

Rāga Gaurī

(189)

राम कहत चलु, राम कहत चलु, राम कहत चलु भाई रे।
 नाहिं तौ भव—बेगारि महुँ परिहै, छूटत अति कठिनाई रे।।1।।
 बाँस पुरान साज सब अठकठ, सरल तिकोन खटोला रे।
 हमहिं दिहल करि कुटिल करमचँद मंद मोल बिनु डोला रे।।2।।
 बिषम कहार मार—मद—माते चलहिं न पाउँ बटोरा रे।
 मंद बिलंद अभेरा दलकन पाइय दुख झकझोरा रे।।3।।
 काँट कुराय लपेटन लोटन ठावहिं ठाउँ बझाऊ रे।
 जस जस चलिय दूरि तस तस निज बास न भेंट लगाऊ रे।।4।।
 मारग अगम, संग नहिं संबल, नाउँ गाउँकर भूला रे।

तुलसिदास भव—त्रास हरहु अब, होहु राम अनुकूला रे । ॥ ५ ॥

(189)

rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu bhā'ī rē.
 nāhiṁ tau bhava-bēgāri maham̐ parihai, chūṭata ati kaṭhinā'ī rē. 1.
 bānśa purāna sāja saba aṭhakaṭha, sarala tikōna khaṭōlā rē.
 hamahiṁ dihalā kari kuṭila karamacam̐da manda mōla binu ḍōlā rē. 2.
 biṣama kahāra māra-mada-mātē calahiṁ na pā'um̐ baṭōrā rē.
 manda bilanda abhērā dalakana pā'ya dukha jhakajhōrā rē. 3.
 kāmṭa kurāya lapēṭana lōṭana ṭhāvahiṁ ṭhā'um̐ bajhā'ū rē.
 jasa jasa caliya dūri tasa tasa nija bāsa na bhēṇṭa lagā'ū rē. 4.
 mārāga agama, saṅga nahiṁ sambala, nā'um̐ gā'um̐kara bhūlā rē.
 tulasidāsa bhava-trāsa harahu aba, hōhu rāma anukūlā rē. 5.

Verse no. 189—[In this wonderful verse, Tulsidas uses the metaphor of the Palanquin and its Bearers to describe the journey of the soul through various lives in this mundane world.

The Palanquin is an ancient mode of carrying passengers, especially members of the nobility, by bearers who carry this frame on their shoulders. It is a covered wooden vehicle, a carriage or a litter, with a framework that consists of a small bed or a few seats to seat the passenger, and this private space is enclosed by curtains on the sides. It is meant to carry one or two passengers, held aloft by two horizontal bamboo poles that are borne by bearers on their shoulders, usually in groups of four or six persons on each side, one group in the front and the other in the rear to lift and carry the carriage forward.

The bearer, like a beast of burden, has to carry this load for as long as he lives as it is his only livelihood to which he is seemingly bound by virtue of his destiny. It is a very tiresome and difficult job to do as long distances are to be covered while carrying this burden on one's shoulders and walking on foot, often on rough terrains and harsh weather conditions, the task being made all the more difficult with the fear of punishment if the passenger, who is usually a member of the nobility and a rich person who are more often than not haughty, inconsiderate and of a whimsical nature, becomes angry at the bearers if they do not walk properly and the carriage swings uncomfortably for the rider.

But the poor bearer finds himself in a quandary: What will he do and how will he feed his own stomach if he does not carry the Palanquin, for this is the only thing he is destined to do and the only vocation he knows of due to his ill-fate? Well of course, if he is determined to break free from this serfdom or bondage to which he is seemingly bound for life, he can very well do it by learning some other skills to free and sustain himself. And if he indeed breaks free from the compulsion of carrying this heavy burden, he finds a lot of comfort, happiness and ease in his life.

This is what is hinted in this verse—if the soul is determined to break free from the cycle of birth and death and its incumbent miseries and horrors, it can easily do it, and the safest and surest method which does not require special skills is to have love, devotion and faith in Lord Ram. This idea is the central theme of this verse.

The bearers of this vehicle often sing some folk songs to break the monotony of the long journey as they tread along on their tedious path. Tulsidas advises the

creature that his life is also like this journey, and he has to cover it on foot himself, i.e. he has to endure all the accompanying miseries and troubles of his life himself. If he wants to redeem himself and ensure that in the future he must not carry this burden again, then why does he not chant Lord Ram's holy Name, which is the great redeemer and provider of freedom from the cycle of birth and death, even as he goes about his daily grind in life in the usual way? If he does so, liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation would come to him unasked for and very easily.

In this metaphor, the soul is the 'passenger', the body is the 'Palanquin', the creature is the 'bearer'.]

'Oh brother (bhāī rē)! (I advise you that you must) Go on chanting and repeating Lord Sri Ram's holy Name (even while you do your daily chores). I stress on this repeatedly (rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu)", because otherwise you'll be caught (trapped) in the slavery (bondage, fetters of surfrage) of this mundane world (i.e. in the myriad numbers of duties, responsibilities, allurements, sorrows, worries etc.—"nāhir̥ tau bhava-bēgāri maham̐ parihai") which would be too difficult for you to shed (i.e. it would be too difficult for you to get freedom from the shackles of this gross mundane world) (chūṭata ati kaṭhināī rē)¹.

[¹It may be possible to break free from the slavery or serfage of a landlord or a king, but the vicious circle or cycle of birth and death in this mundane world will continue to trap you till the time true wisdom and true knowledge of the essence of the soul dawns upon you. To wit, till the time you do not become self-realised and enlightened enough to voluntarily renounce this world and its tempting attachments, you will continue to remain trapped in this vicious cycle of birth and death, and suffer endlessly from its incumbent miseries and horrors.

But oh brother, if you use the shield of Lord Sri Ram's holy and divine Name then the enemies in the form of 'Maya' (a personified form of delusions and their associated prolema in this mundane world) would not be able to enlist you as a slave. That is to say, Maya and its spin-off problems would not disturb you in the least. The delusory effects of this gross material world that seems to give you pleasures and comforts from enjoying its sensual objects that land you in a never-ending chain of problems that rob you of all peace and happiness would leave you alone.

This is because Maya is unable to wield her influence or spell on the servants or devotees of Lord Sri Ram, she being herself a maid of the Lord. This exemption is assured by Lord Sri Ram's name, and it is guaranteed by the Lord himself—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 71.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 45, (ii) Doha no. 46 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precedes Doha no. 59; (iv) from Chaupai line nos. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 72; (v) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 90; and (vi) from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 116—to Doha no. 120.

All the above cited verses endorse the principle laid out in this present verse no. 189 of Vinai Patrika.] (1)

The cunning and wicked (kuṭīla) 'karamacam̐da'² has given us a very bad and dirty 'khaṭōla'³ free of cost (manda mōla binu ḍōlā rē)⁴ to ride in it during our journey through life.

Unfortunately this ugly and troublesome *khaṭōlā* has two old and worn-out rotten bamboo poles (*‘bāmśa purāna’*) attached to it, to lift and carry it forward⁵. All its accoutrements, decorations and furnishings are haphazard, odd and untasteful (*sāja saba aṭhakaṭha*)⁶, and the three seats provided in it are bare of even basic comfort (*sarala tikōna*)⁷.

[²*Karamacamḍa* is a personified form of our evil past deeds and their incumbent negative effects; this term is used as a derogatory epithet for someone whom we loathe but can’t avoid dealing with.

The ‘soul’ or the ‘Atma’ of a creature is his ‘true self’, his ‘true identity’. The creature dies and the Atma assumes a new body in its next birth, and the body that it is assigned is dependent upon the net effect of the aggregate of all the deeds it has done in its previous life. So it is possible that in its previous life a creature was born in a high family, but in the next birth he can be condemned to some lower form of life, say as a dog or a pig. It is because the deeds that this person had done while alive were so sinful and despicable that he had to be punished for them in the form of a lower life in his next birth. This works on the simple theory of action and result, or the doctrine of Karma which states essentially that a person reaps what he sows.

³The word ‘us’ refers to the creature, the living being in general. And the true identity of this creature is his Atma or his soul which is ‘pure consciousness’ and a subtle entity, and not the gross body that is physically present in the world and interacts with it. The ‘body’ is merely a vehicle or the ‘palanquin’ or the ‘*khaṭōlā*’ that carries the soul in its journey through life in this world. This so called ‘*khaṭōlā*’ is a storehouse of numerous problems that cause constant irritation for the soul and keeps the latter agitated. The soul’s journey through life is a repertory of countless miseries, unending grief, pains and tribulations of myriad kinds.

The construction of this *khaṭōlā* that represents the creature’s body is most despicable and ugly as it consists of nothing else but mucous, bones, veins, blood, stool, urine etc. Besides its physical construction, the body is full of negative qualities and characters, is prone to committing sins and evil deeds, and is more attracted to vices and tempted by evil forces than to good things and righteousness. This ‘*khaṭōlā*’ is dirty inasmuch as it lacks spiritual hygiene in the way of devotion, faith and love for the Lord God.

⁴The *khaṭōlā* or the gross body has been given to us, the ‘creature’, free-of-cost so that we grab it greedily as is our natural habit of accepting whatever is offered free of cost to us, in spite of knowing that this particular vehicle, the body, is full of inherent problems and causes so much misery to the rider, the soul. Ironically, the creature loves this ugly *khaṭōlā* because it helps the creature to enjoy the comforts and pleasures offered by the sense objects of the world and thereby gratify his natural urges irrespective of the fact that this causes more heartburn for him in the long run.

⁵The old and worn out ‘bamboo poles’ refer to the two negative qualities inherent in the creature, viz. ‘Avidya’ and ‘Moha’ which means ‘ignorance of the reality’ and ‘delusions that create attachments and longings for the world’ respectively. All sorts of ignorance, illusions, hallucinations, bewilderments etc. come under this category. These two negative qualities of Avidya and Moha control everything the creature does or thinks vis-à-vis the gross material world.

If the bamboo poles do not lift the ‘*khaṭōlā*’, the latter will rest quietly on the ground. Similarly, if these two negative virtues do not disturb the creature, the latter would live in peace and be happy even while living in this world.

⁶The ‘sāja saba’, i.e. the various ugly accoutrements, decorations and furnishings in this vehicle symbolised by the body refer to the countless shortcomings, flaws, faults and defects that it possesses. These are many, some of them are Kaam (passions), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed; rapacity), Mada (arrogance), Moha (attachments), Aviveka or Agyan (ignorance), Matsarya (jealousy, ill-will), Virodha (opposition and animosity), Bhaya (fear), and so on and so forth. All these factors add to the discomfiture caused to the soul that is already suffering from the decrepit condition of the ugly and uncomfortable ‘khaṭōlā’.

They all refer to the various evil tendencies of the mind which result in the body doing evil deeds and the creature is compulsively pushed forward on an evil path.

⁷The ‘sarala tikōna’ refers to the three bare seats provided in this ‘khaṭōlā’. Usually the seat is cushioned and made reasonably comfortable for the rider, but here it is simply exposed rough wooden plank. These ‘three seats’ refer to the three rewards a person gets for all his deeds done in this life, viz. ‘Artha’ or financial gains, ‘Kaam’ or fulfilment of desires, and ‘Sakaam Dharma’ or attaining worldly glory. They are likened to a ‘seat’ because the person is recognised and known by them; he rides on the glory and name acquired by these three rewards of his deeds.

It ought to be noted here that the fourth reward which would actually give the rider, the ‘soul’, peace and happiness is ‘Moksha’ or emancipation and salvation, which this ‘khaṭōlā’ lacks.

The ‘tikōna’ may also refer to the three windows or doors of this ‘khaṭōlā’ through which the rider, in this case the ‘soul’, looks out to the world and sets its destination or direction where it wants to go. They appear deceptively ‘sarala’ or simple because they are easy to achieve but do not give any worthwhile result for the long term good of the soul. The body remains engrossed in pursuing wealth, fulfilment of worldly desires, or acquiring fame and name by successful accomplishments in different fields. But they are ‘deceptive’ inasmuch as they have no sustainable benefit for the welfare of the soul either in this life or in the next.] (2).

The Bearers of this Palanquin (called ‘kahāra’) are ill-trained and odd in number and extremely difficult to keep in order (biṣama). The problem is further compounded by their being rogue and drunk with haughtiness and arrogance (māra-mada-mātē) so much so that they can’t walk properly and in step with each other (calahim na pā’um baṭōrā rē)⁸.

The result is that the palanquin moves ahead in an erratic and jerky manner, sometimes too swiftly, sometimes too slowly, sometimes it swings upwards, sometimes plunges awkwardly downwards, and often times it sways to the left and the right (manda bilanda abhērā dalakana), causing the palanquin to toss and rock violently which causes extreme discomfort to the rider (the soul; pā’iya dukha jhakajhōrā rē).

[⁸Usually there are three pairs of bearers in the front and rear to lift the palanquin evenly so that it moves ahead smoothly. They are well trained and orderly in their movement. But the ‘bearers’ of this symbolic ‘khaṭōlā’ are only five in number, some are in pairs and some single, viz. the five sense organs of the body, such as the ears and the eyes which are in pairs, as well as the nose, the tongue and the skin which are single. The ‘khaṭōlā’ symbolised by the body is therefore asymmetrically made, and its movement is likewise odd and uncomfortable. The

‘movement’ here refers to the tendency of these above five organs of perception to reach out for their respective objects in the external world.

That is, the ‘eye’ wants to see things in the world; the ‘ear’ similarly wants to hear sounds arising in the outside world; the nose wishes to smell the fragrances of the world; the tongue wants to taste its things; and the skin wishes to feel the sensations of this world. In order to fulfil their desires, they have to ‘reach out’ or go out into the world. Once they do so, they feel tempted to move in the direction that appeals to them, dragging the unwilling but helpless soul behind them into the web of miseries and pain that result from the waywardness of these five organs.

Since these five organs would not listen to any sane advice given to them like a drunkard who refuses to hear to any reasoning, the symbolic bearers of this palanquin move ahead with an unsteady and disbalanced gait, rocking the ‘khaṭōlā’ to and fro.

Now, since the ‘khaṭōlā’ itself is old and decrepit, it cannot complain against the bearers who don’t and can’t walk in a balanced, uniform and steady gait. Therefore, the body sometimes does good deeds and sometimes evil deeds in an unpredicable manner, in an almost impulsive way. The five sense organs of speech, touch, smell, hearing and sight do not work in sync or harmony with each other. The resultant tugs and pulls are making life hell for the soul who rides this palanquin symbolised by the body of the creature.] (3).

The path is also not smooth as it is strewn here and there (ṭhāvahim ṭhā’um⁸) with sharp thorns, stones and rocks, as well as with creepers and undergrowth (kāṃṭa kurāya lapēṭana lōṭana) that tangle the feet of the bearers and hinder their progress (bajhā’ū rē)⁹, adding to the troubles and miseries of the rider.

The more he moves ahead on this intractable forest path with its amazing array of illusions and distractions that cause a lot of heartburn to the rider, the further away he gets from his own homestead (where he would have got a lot of peace and happiness) (jasa jasa caliya dūri tasa tasa). He seems lost in this forest, with no one to show him the path (nija bāsa na bhēṇṭa lagā’ū rē)¹⁰.

[⁹In other words, in addition to the problems inherent to the body, there are untold numbers of existential problems in this world over which the creature has no control, but they can’t be avoided or wished away if the creature has to survive in this world. So he has to cope with them and their whimsical nature. Some of these problems are related to other creatures, some to the evil stars, and still others to the fact that the individual is unable to adjust himself to his surroundings because of his stubbornness.

Here, the ‘thorns’ symbolise the miseries created by the sensual attractions of the material sense objects of the world; the different oppositions and adversities faced by the creature in attainment of his goal are like the many ‘stones and rocks’ that hinder his progress; the countless forms of lust, passions, attachments, infatuations and attractions that bind the creature to so many relationships that he develops in this world are like the ‘creepers and the undergrowth’ that tie the feet of the palanquin bearers.

To wit, the creature’s path to salvation and emancipation is littered with thorns, sharp edged stones as well as poisonous creepers in the shape of various attachments, allurments, temptations and enticements of this world that cling to him like dirt covering the body during a long journey, and they cause immense hurdles, agonies and discomfiture to the traveller.

These hurdles force the palanquin to stop here and there. That is, the body is unable to reach its destination of devotion, worship, doing good and noble deeds etc. because of the hindrances caused by the tugs and pulls of this mundane world.

¹⁰Here, the person's own home refers to the realisation that his true 'self', which is pure consciousness and an image of the cosmic Consciousness as well as a source of peace and happiness, resides in his own heart, and that it is futile to search for peace and happiness in the outside world because these virtues can be found within one's own self. The truthful destination for the soul is finding emancipation and salvation for its self and breaking free from the vicious cycle of transmigration, and not in running after the objects of this world which would never give any sustainable happiness.

The more a creature gets entangled in the world, the more he loses his peace; the more he allows himself to do this the stronger and more stubborn his fetters become, and further away from the Truth and eternal source of happiness he is drawn.

As the mind and body go on sinking deeper into the quagmire of illusionary pleasures and hallucinations of this delusory world, the actual and truthful 'real-self' gets further away from the truth which recedes into the background.] (4).

Verily indeed, this path (through life in this mundane world) is very horrible and full of hurdles as described herein above (*māraga agama*), and there is no able companion to help out (*saṅga nahim sambala*)¹¹, and the creature is so confused and overwhelmed with fear that he has lost the way to his destination (*nā'um' gā'um'kara bhūlā rē*)¹².

Tulsidas requests his merciful Lord Ram that in this precarious and dismal situation in which the soul has found itself, the Lord should now step in and show his grace and favour to it (*hōhu rāma anukūlā rē*) by giving it relief from its torments and free it from the horrors of this transmigratory world (*bhava-trāsa harahu aba*)¹³.

[¹¹There is no one to show the right path, too. Everyone in this world is driven by self-interest, and no one bothers about the suffering of the other person and his welfare. So if the miserable creature fails to have company of saints and pious people who would show him the correct path that would be for his real good, then the creature is as good as being lost in a wild forest with no companion and hope of ever seeing his home where he would get peace and comfort again.

¹²In the confusion and chaos that surrounds the unlucky soul, it has forgotten about its true identity, which is not the body but pure and truthful 'consciousness', and also about its true destination, which is to find liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, and attain emancipation and salvation for its self, instead of getting involved in the affairs of this mundane world.

One forgets the name of the destination village out of bewilderments and agitations which have been caused by weariness and fatigue of the journey. The soul in other words has forgotten the ultimate goal of life, which is attainment of the supreme holy feet of Lord Sri Ram, of being 'one' with the Lord and disrupting the vicious cycle or circle of birth and death for all times to come.

¹³Tulsidas asks Lord Ram to please show mercy and compassion on this soul and remove its fears arising out of this ocean-like world of birth and death.] (5).

[Note :- By using the analogy of the 'rider' and the 'palanquin', Tulsidas describes the consternations and the precarious conditions of the soul during its journey through various lives in this gross mundane world. It was foolish enough for

it not to walk the distance, the path, on its own, i.e., use its own discrimination and wisdom to reach the destination which is the Lord himself in this case. But, due to its indolent, lazy and lethargic habits, it thought to sit comfortably on a carrier called the human body, and being thus becoming dependent on it, it had to not only lose the ultimate goal or destination but suffer intemperately, interminably due to the wayward, reckless inclinations of its vehicle, which is the body in this case. Another error of the soul, or the ‘true-self’, was not taking control of the steering wheel and let the vehicle be driven by the driver in the form of Kaliyug. What can it hope from such a driver—he would not only dash the vehicle somewhere, but also never let the soul ever reach its destination. A great and serious message is being conveyed through this analogy by Tulsidas. I think another suitable title for this verse could be ‘*The Pilgrim's Journey through life*’.]

(192)

जो पै जानकिनाथ सों नातो नेहु न नीच ।
 स्वारथ—परमारथ कहा, कलि कुटिल बिगोयो बीच ।।1।।
 धरम बरन आश्रमनिके पैयत पोथिही पुरान ।
 करतब बिनु बेष देखिये, ज्यों सरीर बिनु प्रान ।।2।।
 बेद—बिदित साधन सबै, सुनियत दायक फल चारि ।
 राम—प्रेम बिनु जानिबो जैसे सर—सरिता बिनु बारि ।।3।।
 नाना पथ निरबानके, नाना बिधान बहु भाँति ।
 तुलसी तू मेरे कहे जपु राम—नाम दिन—रात ।।4।।

(192)

jō pai jānakinātha sōm nātō nēhu na nīca.
 svāratha-paramāratha kahā, kali kuṭila bigōyō bīca. 1.
 dharama barana āśramanikē paiyata pōthihī purāna.
 karataba binu bēṣa dēkhiyē, jyōm sarīra binu prāna. 2.
 bēda-bidita sādhana sabai, suniyata dāyaka phala cāri.
 rāma-prēma binu jānibō jaisē sara-sarītā binu bāri. 3.
 nānā patha nirabānakē, nānā bidhāna bahu bhāmṭi.
 tulasī tū mērē kahē japu rāma-nāma dina-rāta. 4.

Verse no. 192—Oh you wicked and dumb-witted fellow (nīca)! If you have not established any relationship with Jankinath (Lord Ram, the Lord of Sita—“jānakinātha”) that is based on the grand and auspicious qualities of having affection and devotion for the Lord and submitting yourself before the Lord (jō pai jānakinātha sōm nātō nēhu na), say then how can you achieve success in your endeavours, whether they are related to your self interest in this temporal life or are concerned with your spiritual matters? (svāratha-paramāratha kahā).

Since you are so foolish that you have not been able establish any such relationship with Lord Ram, even though it would have been for your own good and welfare, it is apparent and obvious that this wicked and cunning bandit known as

‘Kaliyug’ seems to have established his own sway upon you and has robbed you mid-way (kali kuṭila bigōyō bīca)¹.

[¹Verily, a bandit in the form of ‘Kaliyug’ (the present age in a personified form) has managed to waylay you and rob you of your spiritual fortunes by corrupting your mind and intellect, by eclipsing your wisdom and discriminating powers so that you are not even inclined to judge for yourself what is detrimental for you and what is for the best in your own interest. You are not able to understand that your good lies in establishing an abiding relationship with Lord Sri Ram who can ensure your spiritual and temporal well-being and happiness. Instead, impelled and lured by the charms thrown to you by Kaliyug in the form of temptations of this material world of sensual objects, you seem to have drifted away from Lord Ram and fallen into the embrace of your enemy, the Kaliyug, even without being aware of your mistakes because Kaliyug has overshadowed your wisdom and intellect. Say, aren’t you aware that you are ruining your own future under the deluding effects of Kaliyug? So, aren’t you utterly stupid and block-head that you can’t even see what is good or bad for you?] (1).

[This stanza describes the state of affairs in the society during the corrupt age of Kaliyug.]

The principles of Dharma (or codes of proper and righteous conduct) that are expected to be followed by the people in the four Varnas in the society (i.e. the four segments of society, such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra) and in the four Ashrams of life (i.e. the four divisions in life—Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Sanyas, Vanprastha) (dharama barana āśramanikē) are limited only to the thick volumes (pages) of the Purans (ancient scriptures) (paiyata pōthihī purāna); no one bothers to practice them and act according to these principles.

People sport external marks and bear outward appearances of a particular Varna or Ashram they are supposed to belong to or subscribe to as prescribed for the members of the society in the scriptures, but they do so just as a formality and as merely an obligation so that they are not declared apostate and outcaste, and instead are able to integrate themselves into the mainstream of the society. But the fact is that none of these people who pretend to be followers of Dharma by adopting the external signs prescribed by it actually have even a trace of faith and conviction in the noble principles of Dharma as laid down by these scriptures. They rarely practice any of the tenets of the particular Varna or Ashram of whose mark and other paraphernalia they exhibit.

Therefore, in the absence of belief and commitment, in the absence of relevant and concurrent action and deed to back up these external signs or marks that one bears in accordance to the advisory of the scriptures, they have been rendered mere pretentious exhibitions (karataba binu bēṣa dēkhiyē). [People exhibit these external signs and marks to show that they are following the principles of religion and being faithful to them, but in actuality this is a deceitful and cunning act because no one follows the tenets laid down in the scriptures that are supposed to be followed by every person in the society. Hence, all these marks and signs and paraphernalia have been rendered useless, perfunctory, superficial and pretentious; they not only mean that the person is cheating his own self but also those around him.]

It is like the case of a body without life or Pran in it; a body that is dead and inane because it lacks consciousness inside it (jyōm sarīra binu prāna)².

[²Here, external pretensions of Dharma without relevant and concurrent action and deed to back it up is merely for show as it lacks any substance and meaning. It is

like a gross body decorated with ornaments, but which lacks life. Say, what good is there in decorating a dead body? Verily, a living person who has great merit but may lack any kind of decorative paraphernalia is highly honoured by those who are wise, as compared to a mere statue which may be adorned by priceless ornaments but otherwise has no use to the society.] (2).

It is heard (*suniyata*) that the many famous and powerful means, ways and paths described in the Vedas that one follows to attain one's desired objectives in life, both the temporal as well as the spiritual objectives (such as religious sacrifices, penances, austerities, meditation etc.—“*bēda-bidita sādhana sabai*”), are all able to grant the four traditionally honoured rewards to the seeker and the aspirant (*dāyaka phala cāri*)³.

[³The four rewards honoured in the scriptures as being the fruits of one's endeavours that are done in accordance with the principles of Dharma are the following: (i) Artha (wealth, prosperity), Dharma (righteousness, noble conduct), Kaam (fulfilled desires, passions), and Moksha (emancipation and salvation).]

But it should be understood that without the primary fruit in the form of devotion and love for Lord Ram (*rāma-prēma binu jānibō*), all of them should be treated as being like so many rivers and lakes that are without water (*jaisē sara-sarītā binu bāri*)⁴.

⁴To wit, just like so many great rivers and lakes would be useless without there being water in them, all the rewards and trophies in this world would lack value if their awardee lacks love and devotion for Lord Ram. Just like the intrinsic value and importance of any water-body lies in the purity, the cleanliness and the amount of water it has and not on its dimensions or location or even its charming surroundings, the hidden value and worth of a person lies in the glorious virtue of devotion and love for the Lord God that he has in his inner-being rather than the worldly achievements he has made or acclaim he has got for himself in this world due to his merits and deeds. Devotion and love for the Lord is what gives sheen and glow to other noble virtues that a man possesses.] (3).

There are indeed myriads of ways and paths for obtaining salvation and liberation of soul (from the worldly bondage), and each has its own merits (*nānā patha nirabānakē, nānā bidhāna bahu bhām̐ti*).

But nevertheless oh Tulsidas, pay heed to my sincere advice and chant or repeat Lord Sri Ram's holy Name night and day (*tulasī tū mērē kahē japu rāma-nāma dina-rāta*). [If you do so, if you follow my advice, then you will not have to run from pillar to post seeking end to your miseries and torments in this world. It is evident here that Tulsidas is addressing himself.] (4).

(226)

भरोसो जाहि दूसरो सो करो ।
मोको तो रामको नाम कलपतरु कलि कल्याण फरो ॥१॥
करम उपासन, ग्यान, बेदमत, सो सब भाँति खरो ।
मोहि तो 'सावनके अंधहि' ज्यों सूझत रंग हरो ॥२॥

चाटत रह्यो स्वान पातरि ज्यों कबहुँ न पेट भरो ।
 सो हौं सुमिरत नाम—सुधारस पेखत परुसि धरो ॥3॥
 स्वारथ औ परमारथ हू को नहि कुंजरो—नरो ।
 सुनियत सेतु पयोधि पषाननि करि कपि—कटक तरौ ॥4॥
 प्रीति—प्रतीति जहाँ जाकी, तहँ ताको काज सरो ।
 मेरे तो माय—बाप दोउ आखर, हौं सिसु—अरनि अरो ॥5॥
 संकर साखि जो राखि कहौं कछु तौ जरि जीह गरो ।
 अपनो भलो राम—नामहि ते तुलसिहि समुझि परो ॥6॥

(226)

bharōsō jāhi dūsarō sō karō.
 mōkō tō rāmakō nāma kalapataru kali kalyāna pharō. 1.
 karama upāsana, gyāna, bēdamata, sō saba bhāmṭi kharō.
 mōhi tō 'sāvanakē andhahi' jyōm sūjhata raṅga harō. 2.
 cāṭata rahyō svāna pātari jyōm kabahum' na pēṭa bharō.
 sō hauṁ sumirata nāma-sudhārasa pēkhata parusi dharō. 3.
 svāratha au paramāratha hū kō nahi kunjarō-narō.
 suniyata sētu payōdhi paṣānani kari kapi-kaṭaka tarō. 4.
 prīti-pratīti jahām' jākī, taham' tākō kāja sarō.
 mērē tō māya-bāpa dō'u ākhara, hauṁ sisu-arani arō. 5.
 saṅkara sākhi jō rākhi kahauṁ kachu tau jari jīha garō.
 apanō bhalō rāma-nāmahi tē tulasīhi samujhi parō. 6.

Verse no. 226—[This verse further elaborates on the idea expressed in the preceding verse no. 225—that Tulsidas relies exclusively on Lord Ram for all his worldly needs and spiritual goals. He does not seek anything from anyone else.]

If anyone wants, then let him go anywhere else to seek and find support, succour, solace and reliance from anyone he chooses (bharōsō jāhi dūsarō sō karō). As for me (Tulsidas), Lord Sri Ram's holy Name is like a Kalpa Tree in Kaliyug as it bears fruits of auspiciousness, welfare and all round well-beings (mōkō tō rāmakō nāma kalapataru kali kalyāna pharō)¹.

[¹To wit, it is only by the good effects of the holy Name of Lord Ram that I have become respected, honoured and praised in this world. I can now claim emancipation and salvation for myself, something that evaded me throughout my different births. Though I am totally worthless otherwise and possess aught naught anything that can be regarded as being meritorious, but it is the positive effects of the Lord's holy Name that I can now say with confidence that I have a standing in this world, that I have a direct contact with the Lord who is the redeemer of the soul of all, and that I have finally found abiding peace and tranquility for myself and my soul.] (1).

Though it is true that the different paths for one's spiritual well-being and liberation that have been enumerated and sanctioned in the Vedas (bēdamata), such as 'Karma', 'Upasana' and 'Gyan'² (karama upāsana, gyāna) are all true and effective in every respect (sō saba bhāmṭi kharō), but for me they are all useless

and meaningless like a man who becomes blind after having seen the greenery of the rainy season (mōhi tō 'sāvanakē andhahi' jyōm sūjhata raṅga harō)³.

[²The word 'Karma' means doing meritorious deeds for one's spiritual welfare. The word 'Upasana' means religious exercises such as offering of prayers, worship, devotion etc. that one undertakes for attaining his spiritual goals. And the word 'Gyan' refers to acquisition of wisdom and true knowledge for achieving the same goal. Tulsidas asserts that it is true that all these spiritual paths as outlined in the Vedas and other scriptures are definitely correct and effective, there is no doubt about it, but for him they mean nothing, for he has decided to rely upon Lord Ram and his holy Name for all his worldly as well as spiritual needs and goals in life.

³A man who suddenly becomes blind after the rainy season will always remember the sight of the picturesque green fields, the trees laden with green leaves, colourful flowers and fruits, and the vibrant colours of Nature that he had last seen before he lost his sights. So even during the winter season or during droughts, if someone asks him to describe his surroundings, he would always cite the last scene of greenery he had seen before losing his sight. Tulsidas alludes to this metaphor to mean that he has become virtually 'blind' to, or un-interested in, all other means and sources that can help a person to attain spiritual welfare. He has chosen to rely exclusively on the mystical powers of the holy Name of Lord Ram for all his spiritual as well as temporal needs.

Tulsidas avers that just like a blind man, who has lost his eyesight during the rainy season, sees or imagines that there is no other colour except green—the last colour he saw before becoming blind, so likewise he too sees no other help or succour for himself from any quarter other than Sri Ram.] (2).

Earlier I had roamed about like a dog who licks at discarded platters of food (cāṭata rahyō svāna pātari jyōm), but my hunger was never satisfied (kabahum' na pēṭa bharō).

But today I see nectar in front of me by virtue of remembering and chanting Lord Sri Ram's holy Name so much so that I can partake of this nectar as much as I want (sō haum sumirata nāma-sudhārasa pēkhata parusi dharō)⁴.

[⁴Tulsidas says that though he had enjoyed reasonable comforts in life earlier but he had never found permanent contentment and an abiding sense of fulfilment anywhere at any time. Though he had had happiness and joy on many occasions, but they were all transient and gross in nature. True and complete happiness, joy, bliss and tranquility of a sublime nature had always eluded me. Now he feels so fortunate that just by remembering the Lord's holy Name, he has discovered an eternal fount of bliss and beatitude as if a bowl of sweet nectar had been offered to him on a platter. In other words, liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation is there for him for the asking. He can access them whenever he so wishes. But he says that at present he wishes to enjoy sucking and sipping at the sweet nectar of bliss and contentedness that comes with remembering the Lord and his holy Name.] (3).

For me, Lord Sri Ram's holy Name is a means to serve both my ends—i.e. it serves my interests in this temporal world by making me happy and blissful, and at the same time it ensures my spiritual welfare by providing me with the reward of the final liberation and deliverance from the bondage of this world and the endless cycle of transmigration of my soul (svāratha au paramāratha hū kō).

In all sooth and without gainsay, I am very definite and positive about what I say; it is not like the confusion that was created (during the epic war of the

Mahabharat) when it was declared that ‘an elephant’ had been killed in the battle-field (nahi kunjarō-narō)^{#5}.

[^{#5}This alludes to the incident in Mahabharat war when cunning, treachery and half-truths were used to cheat the opposing side. An elephant whose name resembled that of a warrior named Aswathama was killed, and it was made to appear that the warrior himself had died. This story is outlined in brief at the end of this verse.]

I have heard about the marvellous mystical powers and the tremendous potentials of the holy Name of the Lord (Ram) that says that the monkey-army had constructed a wonderous floating bridge of stones (boulders) on the mighty ocean and had crossed it effortlessly (to reach the demon capital of Lanka). (suniyata sētu payōdhi paṣānani kari kapi-kaṭaka tarō)⁶.

[⁶The holy Name of Lord Ram was etched by Hanuman, the monkey warrior, on each stone before it was thrown on the water of the ocean. Instead of sinking, these stones floated to form a bridge from the shore of the mainland to the island capital of Lanka where the demons had ensnared Sita, the wife of Lord Ram. The most remarkable and astonishing thing is the fact that the ferocious and turbulent ocean, with its powerful buffeting, heaving and splashing waves that could even capsize huge ships or turn them turtle, could not dismantle this bridge. The ocean was forced to be tamed itself. Such is the glory of the Lord's holy Name that heavy boulders could float on the rough and choppy waters of the ocean as if they were light planks of wood or small balls of paper.] (4).

It is said that a person is able to achieve what he desires if he has a firm faith and conviction in the path he adopts or follows for the fulfilment of his desired goal. This will be possible only when he loves and enjoys the path he follows (and does not treat it as a burden thrust upon him)—because then he won't be distracted, and his faith and commitment would help him to achieve success (prīti-pratīti jahām jākī, taham tākō kāja sarō).

Following this principle I can say honestly and with conviction that for me the two syllables ‘Ra’ and ‘Ma’ of Lord Sri Ram's holy Name “RAM” are like my parents (the former representing my ‘father’ and the latter representing my ‘mother’) (mērē tō māya-bāpa dō'u ākhara)⁷.

[⁷To wit, I am so firm in my beliefs and convinced beyond doubt that the holy Name of Lord Ram will surely and certainly take good care of me and all my needs, whether related to my welfare in this temporal world or to the welfare of my spiritual future. This being the case, I need not follow any other paths as devised by the Vedas and outlined in stanza no. 2 herein above.]

This is the reason why I have determined to stubbornly remain at the holy feet of Lord Ram just like a child stubbornly seeks something from his parent and refuses to move away till his wishes are granted (haum sisu-arani arō)⁸.

[⁸To wit, I will stick to my demand of seeking liberation and deliverance by the virtue of the grace of Lord Ram and his holy Name, and would not divert my mind and attention from my goal no matter what temptations are proffered to me. I wot naught aught else; I know of no other Lord or spiritual paths other than this.] (5).

If I tell a lie or have any kind of pretensions, deceit and falsehood when I say what I say, or if I conceal anything, then honestly, with Lord Shiva as a witness (saṅkara sākhi jō rākhi kahauṁ kachu), let my tongue get either be burnt or fall out in guilt (tau jari jīha garō)⁹.

[⁹To wit, what I have been saying in all these verses are not merely fanciful flights of my imagination as a poet who would be inclined to employ hyperbole to say what he wishes to say, but it is an expression of the actual state of affairs.]

I (Tulsidas) have come to understand and am convinced that my welfare, my well-being and my good lies only with the holy Name of Lord Sri Ram (apanō bhalō rāma-nāmahi tē tulasīhi samujhi parō) (6).

[⁵The story of Aswathama: During the Mahabharat war, Dronacharya was fighting ferociously on behalf of the Kaurav's and started creating havoc in the Pandava army. It was felt necessary to kill him, but Arjun refused because the former had been his teacher. So, Krishna used a trick. He asked Bheem to kill an elephant called Aswathama, which also happened to be the name of Dronacharya's son whom he loved dearly. When the news reached him, in order to confirm its veracity, Dronacharya asked Yudhisthir, who was renowned for his truthfulness. The latter replied, 'Aswathama had died, man or elephant....']

But before the words 'or elephant' could be pronounced, Krishna blew his conch so loudly that the words were inaudible to Dronacharya. Shocked at the possibility of the death of his beloved son, he fainted. Then Dhrista Dymna cut off his head. Ever since this event, the phrase 'Ashwathama, man or elephant' has been used to denote 'half truths', or deceitful, cunning, tricky utterances and dubious behaviour.]

(227)

नाम राम रावरोई हित मेरे ।
स्वारथ-परमारथ साथिन्ह सों भुज उठाइ कहौं टेरे ॥1॥
जननी-जनक तज्यो जनमि, करम बिनु बिधिहु सृज्यो अवडेरै ।
मोहुँसों कोउ-कोउ कहत रामहि को, सो प्रसंग केहि केरे ॥2॥
फिर्यौ ललात बिनु नाम उदर लागि, दुखउ दुखित मोहि हेरे ।
नाम-प्रसाद लहत रसाल-फल अब हौं बबुर बहेरे ॥3॥
साधत साधु लोक-परलोकहि, सुनि गुनि जतन घनेरे ।
तुलसीके अवलंब नामको, एक गाँठि कइ फेरे ॥4॥

(227)

nāma rāma rāvarō'i hita mērē.
svāratha-paramāratha sāthinha sōm bhuja uṭhā'i kahaurṁ ṭērē. 1.
jananī-janaka tajyō janami, karama binu bidhihu srjyō avaḍērē.
mōhumśōm kō'u-kō'u kahata rāmahi kō, sō prasaṅga kēhi kērē. 2.
phirā'au lalāta binu nāma udara lagi, dukha'u dukhita mōhi hērē.
nāma-prasāda lahata rasāla-phala aba haurṁ babura bahērē. 3.
sādhata sādhu lōka-paralōkahi, suni guni jatana ghanērē.
tulasīkē avalamba nāmakō, ēka gāmṭhi ka'i phērē. 4.

Verse no. 227—Oh Lord Sri Ram! In all sooth and without gainsay, your lordship's holy Name is my only well-wisher, my true benefactor and the exclusive source

wherein lies my all-round well-being (nāma rāma rāvarō'i hita mērē)—I declare this fact loudly without reservations and with my arms raised as a token of my utmost honesty, sincerity and conviction when I make this proclamation (bhuja uṭhā'i kahaurṁ ṭērē) to everyone, to all my acquaintances (sāthinha sōm), those who have some kind of personal vested interest in keeping acquaintance with me (e.g., my family members) as well as those who are not related to me and have only a spiritual interest with me (e.g., saints, spiritual seekers, pious persons, and those who seek the Truth) (svāratha-paramāratha) (1).

I am so exceedingly unfortunate that my parents had abandoned me as soon as I was born (jananī-janaka tajyō janami); even the creator Brahma had destined nothing good for me and had made me anamolous and unfit for the world (karama binu bidhihu srjyō avaḍērē)¹.

[¹To wit, Brahma did not provide anything in my fate that can be regarded as good and beneficial for me. I am very poor and lack all wherewithals that a person would need for leading a reasonably comfortable and respectable life in this world. The creator even tweaked my mind to such an extent that my thinking process is regarded as being unconventional by others around me in the world. Even my peers and those I might consider my friends are at odds with me.]

Inspite of this oddity and my grave ill-fortune, some people still prefer to call me a 'follower or devotee of Lord Sri Ram' (which is a rare honour for a lowly and ill-fated man like me) (mōhumśōm kō'u-kō'u kahata rāmaḥi kō). I wonder why do they call me so; what is the reason (for extending this privilege and honour to me though I think I do not deserve it; I am really baffled)? (sō prasaṅga kēhi kērē)².

[²Surely, to be called a 'follower or a devotee of the Lord' is an honour and a privilege reserved only for the most pious and holy of men, which I think I am not. But since people do address me in this way, it is obviously due to the good influences of Lord Sri Ram's holy Name that I am given this honour, because I keep on repeating the Lord's name in spite of being deprived of all other goodness and virtues that a man worthy of such an honour is expected to possess.] (2).

[Till the time I had taken refuge in the name of Sri Ram—] I had to wander like an unknown and unrecognised vagrant, a vagabond who had no identity of his own (binu nāma), wistfully searching from door to door for morsels of food to fill my hungry stomach (phiraīau lalāta udara lagi).

My condition was so miserable, so wretched and so pitiful that even 'sorrow' despaired at it; even 'misery' felt miserable when it saw me (dukha'u dukhita mōhi hērē).

But look at the wonder of all wonders that by the grace and kindness of Lord Sri Ram (nāma-prasāda lahata), the trees of 'Babul' (Acacia) and 'Bahera' (belleric myrobalan) have started bearing fruits of mango for me (rasāla-phala aba haurṁ babura bahērē)³!

[³To wit, the world which was full of torments and miseries for me and had always abhorred and detested me, has now become hospitable, welcoming, compatible and pleasant for me once I decided to surrender my self at the holy feet of Lord Ram, and regard the Lord and his holy Name as my only source of succour and solace and true benefactor. What was once a miserable life for me when I had not even sufficient food to feed my hungry stomach, and was sneered and rebuked and derided and

rejected wherever I went, now for me, thanks to the Lord and his holy Name, it is an honourable life, when the same people who abhorred me once have started showing respect to me even as they welcome me with a smile—because they now regard me as a ‘devotee and follower of Lord God Sri Ram, the Supreme Lord of the world’. What a miracle and a change is this indeed! It only goes to show the stupendity of the divine powers possessed by the ‘Name of the Lord’, and its astounding glories and mystical benefits.] (3).

Those who are saintly, pious, wise and learned are able to ensure a good future for themselves by the virtue of hearing the scriptures, following the auspicious path prescribed by them, and practicing the principles devised by them for one’s all-round well-being, both in the temporal world for as long as they live in it as well as for their spiritual welfare by attaining emancipation and salvation (*sādhata sādhu lōka-paralōkahi, suni guni jatana ghanērē*).

But truly and honestly and without gainsay, as far as Tulsidas is concerned, there is only one support for him and there is only one single source from which all his good and welfare can be derived—and it is the ‘holy Name of Lord Ram’ (*tulasikē avalamba nāmakō*).

Just like the case when any given number of threads can be tied together by a single knot, this device of Lord Ram’s holy Name helps one to tie together the benefits obtained by following different paths as proscribed in the scriptures with the objective of attaining one’s temporal and spiritual goals as well as all-round welfare and well-being (*ēka gāmṭhi ka’i phērē*)⁴.

[⁴All the threads will fall apart if the knot is untied. Likewise, all the different spiritual and religious paths devised and proscribed in the scriptures will come to a naught if there is no name of Lord Ram in any of them. All efforts undertaken by an aspirant or seeker would be in vain if he does not take the support of Lord Ram’s holy Name as the basic and necessary ingredient of his religious and spiritual practices.] (4).

(237)

काहे न रसना, रामहि गावहि?
 निसिदिन पर—अपवाद वृथा कत रटि—रटि राग बढ़ावहि ।।1।।
 नरमुख सुंदर मंदिर पावन बसि जनि ताहि लजावहि ।
 ससि समीप रहि त्यागि सुधा कत रविकर—जल कहँ धावहि ।।2।।
 काम—कथा कलि—कैरव—चंदिनि, सुनत श्रवन दै भावहि ।
 तिनहिं हटकि कहिहरि—कल—कीरति, करन कलंक नसावहि ।।3।।
 जातरूप मति, जुगुति रुचिर मनि रचि—रचि हार बनावहि ।
 सरन—सुखद रबिकुल—सरोज—रबि राम—नृपहि—पहिरावहि ।।4।।
 बाद—बिबाद, स्वाद तजि भजि हरि, सरस चरित चित लावहि ।
 तुलसिदास भव तरहि, तिहँ पुर तू पुनीत जस पावहि ।।5।।

(237)

kāhē na rasanā, rāmahi gāvahi?

nisidina para-apavāda vṛthā kata raṭi-raṭi rāga baṛhāvahi. 1.
 naramukha sundara mandira pāvana basi jani tāhi lajāvahi.
 sasi samīpa rahi tyāgi sudhā kata ravikara-jala khamṁ dhāvahi. 2.
 kāma-kathā kali-kairava-candini, sunata śravana dai bhāvahi.
 tinahim haṭaki kahihari-kala-kīrati, karana kalaṅka nasāvahi. 3.
 jātarūpa mati, juguti rucira mani raci-raci hāra banāvahi.
 sarana-sukhada rabikula-sarōja-rabi rāma-nṛpahi-pahirāvahi. 4.
 bāda-bibāda, svāda taji bhaji hari, sarasa carita cita lāvahi.
 tulasidāsa bhava tarahi, tihūṁ pura tū punīta jasa pāvahi. 5.

Verse no. 237—[In the context of this verse, refer also to verse no. 129 and 247 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’ where Tulsidas has advised the Tongue wisely in a similar manner.]

Oh my Tongue (rasanā)! Why don't you sing (i.e. talk and discuss) about the countless glories, the excellent fame, the virtuous qualities, and the divine stories of Lord Sri Ram (kāhē na rasanā, rāmahi gāvahi)?

Why do you wear yourself down and increase your delusions and get confounded, why do you enhance your attachment and entanglement with this world by worthlessly criticising and speaking ill of others, gossiping, tatling, chattering ceaselessly, and indulging in heresy and hearsay, day and night (i.e. always)? (nisidina para-apavāda vṛthā kata raṭi-raṭi rāga baṛhāvahi) (1).

Why do you stay to defile and put to shame the beautiful and sanctified symbolic shrine represented by the mouth of a human body (naramukha sundara mandira pāvana basi jani tāhi lajāvahi)?

[To wit, oh Tongue, why do you not take Sri Ram's holy Name to keep and maintain the holiness and sanctity of the temple-like mouth of the human body, instead of polluting it with worthless chatter?]

Why do you run behind the illusionary water of the mirage (symbolised by the allurements, attachments and enticements of the object of this deluding world) to quench your thirst even though you have a direct access to an eternal source of Amrit, the elixir of life (by the way of being able to utter the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram and sing his glories)? (sasi samīpa rahi tyāgi sudhā kata ravikara-jala khamṁ dhāvahi).

[To wit, why doesn't the tongue chant the holy Name of Lord Ram instead of constantly chattering about useless things related to this delusory world?] (2).

The talk about the pleasures, comforts and charms of the different sense objects of this materialistic mundane world (kāma-kathā) are like the rays of the moon that help the water-lilies, symbolised by all the countless temptations associated with the present corrupt era of Kaliyug, to bloom (kali-kairava-candini)¹.

[¹The water lily blooms in the light of the moon during the night. Tulsidas cites this example to stress that talking about worldly matters and charms of the countless objects of the senses would naturally ignite attraction and infatuation for them. All these relate to the world which is compared to Kaliyug because both are dark and fearsome for the creature. The moon rises only during the night, and ‘night’ is a metaphor for all things that are dark, fearsome, deluding and ridden with spiritual

ignorance. No one can see properly in the darkness of the night; even the moonlight does not help much, and often it casts such ominous and eerie long shadows that a person begins to imagine that he is seeing a shadow of ghosts and phantoms. Hence, the moonlight more often than not inspires fear and horror.]

Oh Tongue! You are so naïve that you spend your precious time and energy in attentively hearing about them, and getting enthralled and captivated by them (*sunata śravaṇa dai bhāvahi*).

Oh Tongue! Stop talking about the pleasures and objects of this world, and instead sing the magnificent glories and fames of Lord Sri Hari (Sri Ram) so that the ignominy and blemishes cast upon the ears by hearing nonsense things are removed and eliminated for your own good (*tinahim haṭaki kahihari-kala-kīraṭi, karaṇa kalaṅka naśāvahi*)².

[²The ears have become tainted and polluted by constantly hearing about this world and its nuisance, and it can be rectified and purified only by hearing the pure and glorious fame of Sri Ram, and it is the tongue which can do it. This is because one hears about anything only when someone speaks or talks about it, and ‘speaking and talking’ are the function of the ‘tongue’. So the main culprit in spreading heresy and hearsay, in entangling the creature in the web of delusions and ignorance, in creating lust and passion and attachment in him, is the ‘tongue’.] (3).

Make a symbolic garland of gold representing wisdom, intellect and discrimination, use beautiful beads made up of various methods (to worship, adore, revere and have devotion for the Lord) to complete this garland (*jātarūpa mati, juguti rucira mani raci-raci hāra banāvahi*), and then offer it to Lord Sri Ram who is a provider of comfort, solace and succour to those who have sought refuge in his holy feet, and who is like a ‘sun’ that enables the lotus of the Sun-race to bloom (*sarana-sukhada rabikula-sarōja-rabi rāma-nṛpaḥi-pahirāvahi*)³.

[³The tongue is advised to chant and sing the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram, about his excellent virtues, glories and fame. For this purpose, the tongue should take the help of the mind with its resources of purified wisdom and refined intellect. Talking about the holiness and divinity of the Lord in an honest and affectionate way, with faith and devotion, is the symbolic form of worship that the ‘tongue’ can do. Since ‘gold’ is the most precious of things that one gifts to someone whom he loves dearly, such talk of the Lord is a symbolic offering of a golden garland to him. The ‘beads’ of this garland would be the different episodes related to Lord Ram from the scriptures, as well as the many excellent virtues and divine qualities of the Lord that one narrates.] (4).

Oh Tongue! Abandon talking about all things that cause discord, debate, confusion, bewilderment and dilemma, and without paying attention to their ‘taste’ (i.e., whether any of these things are pleasant or not, attractive or not) (*bāda-bibāda, svāda taji*), you should focus your attention to having devotion for Lord Ram, adoring and venerating the Lord, having faith in him, developing true affection for him, worshipping him, and involving yourself in singing the Lord’s glories, virtues and fame (*bhaji hari, sarasa carita cita lāvahi*).

If you do it, then (with your help) Tulsidas shall cross this ocean-like world for sure (i.e., he shall certainly be free from the cycle of birth and death; he shall overcome the horrors incumbent with transmigration) (*tulasidāsa bhava tarahi*).

And at the same time, you shall also become eligible for great honour and renown in all the three Lokas (worlds) (tihūṁṁ pura tū punīta jasa pāvahi) (5).

(247)

राम जपु जीह! जानि, प्रीति सों प्रतीत मानि,
 रामनाम जपे जैहै जियकी जरनि ।
 रामनामसों रहनि, रामनामकी कहनि,
 कुटिल कलि—मल—सोक—संकट—हरनि ।।1।।
 रामनामको प्रभाउ पूजियत गनराउ,
 कियो न दुराउ, कही आपनी करनि ।
 भव—सागरको सेतु, कासीहू सुगति हेतु,
 जपत सादर संभु सहित घरनि ।।2।।
 बालमीकि ब्याध हे अगाध—अपराध—निधि,
 'मरा' 'मरा' जपे पूजे मुनि अमरनि ।
 रोक्खो बिंध्य, सोख्यो सिंधु घटजहुँ नाम—बल,
 हास्यो हिय, खारो भयो भूसुर—डरनि ।।3।।
 नाम—महिमा अपार, सेष—सुक बार—बार
 मति—अनुसार बुध बेदहू बरनि ।
 नामरति—कामधेनु तुलसीको कामतरु,
 रामनाम है बिमोह—तिमिर—तरनि ।।4।।

(247)

rāma japu jīha! jāni, prīti sōṁ pratīta māni,
 rāmanāma japē jaihai jiyakī jarani.
 rāmanāmasōṁ rahani, rāmanāmakī kahani,
 kuṭila kali-mala-sōka-saṅkaṭa-harani. 1.
 rāmanāmakō prabhā'u pūjīyata ganarā'u,
 kiyō na durā'u, kahī āpanī karani.
 bhava-sāgarakō sētu, kāśihū sugati hētu,
 japata sādara sambhu sahita gharani. 2.
 bālamīki byādha hē agādha-aparādha-nidhi,
 'marā' 'marā' japē pūjē muni amarani.
 rōkyō bindhya, sōkhyō sindhu ghaṭajahamṁ nāma-bala,
 hāraiō hiya, khārō bhayō bhūsura-ḍarani. 3.
 nāma-mahimā apāra, sēṣa-suka bāra-bāra
 mati-anusāra budha bēdahū barani.
 nāmarati-kāmadhēnu tulasīkō kāmataru,
 rāmanāma hai bimōha-timira-tarani. 4.

Verse no. 247—Oh my Tongue (jīha)! Chant Lord Ram's holy Name constantly and consistently (rāma japu), understand its essence and glorious spiritual values, develop affection for it, and have faith and belief in it (jāni, prīti sōṁ pratīta māni)¹.

[Do you know why? Well, I shall tell you the reason now.] By the chanting of this single holy Name of Lord Sri Ram, your heart-burn due to the three Traitaps² would calm down (*rāmanāma japē jaihai jiyakī jarani*).

Involve yourself in chanting Lord Sri Ram's holy Name as if that is the only work you have and it is your identity (*rāmanāmasōm rahani*). Speak nothing else but Lord Sri Ram's 'Name' (*rāmanāmakī kahani*).

This sort of refuge in the holy Name of the Lord is extremely rewarding and beneficial for you as it eliminates all the sufferings and miseries inflicted upon the creature due to the countless sins, numerous types of sorrows and torments, and the untold difficulties and seemingly insurmountable problems that are associated with life during the present era know as Kaliyug which is inherently malicious, corrupt, deceitful, crooked and wicked (*kuṭīla kali-mala-sōka-saṅkaṭa-harani*).

[¹The outstanding divine nature and the immensity of the glorious spiritual powers and values of the holy Name of Lord Ram have been sung in countless scriptures. Some of these examples are the following: (i) Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad which is part of the Atharva Veda; (ii) Tulsidas' epic 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28; (iii) Kavita-wali, Uttar Kand, verse nos. 89-93, 178; and (iv) this present Book 'Vinai Patrika', verse nos. 46, 65-70.

²The 'three Taaps', or the Traitaap, refer to the following torments and tribulations that horrify all living beings: (i) Adhyatmic—related to one's spiritual welfare; (ii) Adhibhautic—related to worldly affairs; and (iii) Adhidaivic—related to adverse gods and opposed stars.] (1).

Lord Ganesh is worshipped first (i.e., in the beginning of any religious ceremony or ritual)³ due to the grace, the potential powers and the influence of Sri Ram's holy Name (*rāmanāmakō prabhā'u pūjīyata ganarā'u*). Ganesh has himself declared this very frankly, and had kept nothing concealed (*kiyō na durā'u, kahī āpanī karani*).

This Sri Ram's holy Name is like a bridge that enables the creature to across the ocean-like gross world of mundane existence (*bhava-sāgarakō sētu*). This is the reason why Lord Shiva, accompanied by his consort Parvati⁴, chants this holy Name himself with the greatest of reverence in Kashi (Varanasi) in order to give salvation to those who die there (*kāsīhū sugati hētu japata sādara sambhu sahita gharani*)⁵.

[³Lord Ganesh's story in brief: Once there was a dispute among the Gods regarding who was to be worshipped first amongst them. It was decided that he who circles the universe first shall be the winner. All the Gods mounted their respective vehicles and dashed out. Shiva's son Ganesh was fat, pot bellied and his mount was the meek mouse. Finding him in consternation, sage Narad advised him to write the name of Sri Ram and go around it—for that would be tantamount to going round the entire creation. In the final judgement, Ganesh won. This story emphasises the glory and importance of Ram's holy Name.

⁴Refer 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 19.

⁵Refer 'Ram Charit Manas', Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 19; Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 108.] (2).

Valmiki, who was a hunter and bandit by nature, had innumerable sins and countless evil deeds standing to his discredit and undermining any good prospects for his future

(bālamīki byādha hē agādha-aparādha-nidhi), but by chanting the name of Sri Ram in the reverse order as ‘Mara-Mara’ he became so pure and exalted that even the hermits, the sages and the gods worshipped and revered him (‘marā’ ‘marā’ japē pūjē muni amarani)⁶.

Sage Agastya (ghaṭajahamū) had stopped Mt. Vindhyachal (from expanding further)⁷ and had dried up the ocean (by drinking it) on the strength of this one name (rōkyō bindhya, sōkhyō sindhu nāma-bala). Later on, being ashamed of itself and scared of the sage, the ocean became extremely ‘bitter’ (or salty) (hārāiō hiya, khārō bhayō bhūsurā-ḍarani).

[⁶Refer ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 19; and ‘Vinai Patrika’, verse no. 151, stanza no. 7, and verse no. 156, stanza no. 2.

⁷The story of sage Agastya and Mt. Vindhyachal: Mt. Vindhyachal was a huge, lofty mountain, so high that the sun's rays scorched the trees, creepers and animals living on it. Infuriated, it decided to obstruct the sun altogether; so it started rising. Scared that this would be calamitous for ecology, the Gods approached sage Agastya to find a solution. The sage pronounced Sri Ram's holy Name, put a hand over the peak of Vindhyachal and asked it to lie down. It lies there ever since. This incident as well as the gulping of the entire ocean by uttering Ram's ‘Name’ thrice are cited by Tulsidas to highlight the glory and potent of Ram's holy Name.

The story of sage Agastya drinking the water of the ocean has been narrated in a note appended to verse no. 13, stanza no. 5 of this Book ‘Vinai Patrika’. Refer also to ‘Ram Charit Manas’, Baal Kand, Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 32.] (3).

The glory, fame, renown, potent, powers and spell of Sri Ram's holy Name are immense, astounding and measureless (nāma-mahimā apāra).

Shesh-Nath (the legendary serpent), Shukdeo (the sage parrot), the Vedas and Pandits (expert in scriptures) have repeatedly and assertively described it according to their wisdom and intellect (sēṣa-suka bāra-bāra mati-anusāra budha bēdahū barani).

For Tulsidas, having affection and endearment for Sri Ram's holy Name is akin to having a Kamdhenu Cow and the Kalpa Tree by his side (nāmarati-kāmadhēnu tulasikō kāmataru)⁸.

[⁸To wit, just like these two, the ‘Cow’ and the ‘Tree’, would give a person any and every thing he wants, the holy and divine Name of Lord Ram also would fulfil every desire of a person who utters it. Tulsidas says that he has got an honourable position in society and has gained eligibility for emancipation, salvation and supreme bliss by just relying on the strength of Sri Ram's holy Name.]

What more, this divine and holy Name of Lord Ram is like the ‘sun’ itself for the purpose of removing the darkness of ignorance and delusions (rāmanāma hai bimōha-timira-tarani)⁹.

[⁹Even as the ‘sun’ instantly removes the darkness of the night, Lord Ram's Name also immediately dispels all horrors arising out of ignorance and delusions.] (4).

(255)

राम! रावरो नाम साधु-सुरतरु है।
 सुमिरे त्रिबिध घाम हरत, पूरत काम,
 सकल सुकृत सरसिजको सरु है॥1॥
 लाभहूको लाभ, सुखहुको सुख, सरबस,
 पतित-पावन, डरहूको डरु है।
 नीचेहूको ऊँचेहूको, रंकहूको रावहूको
 सुलभ, सुखद आपनो-सो घरु है॥2॥
 वेद हू, पुरान हू, पुरारि हू पुकारि कह्यो,
 नाम-प्रेम चारिफलहूको फरु है।
 ऐसे राम-नाम सों न प्रीति, न प्रतीति मन,
 मेरे जान, जानिबो सोई नर खरु है॥3॥
 नाम-सो न मातु-पितु, मीत-हित, बंधु-गुरु,
 साहिब, सुधी, सुसील, सुधाकरु है।
 नामसों निबाह नेहु, दीनको दयालु! देहु,
 दासतुलसीको, बलि; बड़ो बरु है॥4॥

(255)

rāma! rāvarō nāma sādhu-surataru hai.
 sumirē tribidha ghāma harata, pūrata kāma,
 sakala sukr̥ta sarasijakō saru hai. 1.
 lābhahūkō lābha, sukhahūkō sukha, sarabasa,
 patita-pāvana, ḍarahūkō ḍaru hai.
 nīcēhūkō ūm̐cēhūkō, raṅkahūkō rāvahūkō
 sulabha, sukhada āpanō-sō gharu hai. 2.
 vēda hū, purāna hū, purāri hū pukāri kahyō,
 nāma-prēma cāriphalahūkō pharu hai.
 aisē rāma-nāma sōm̐ na prīti, na pratīti mana,
 mērē jāna, jānibō sō'ī nara kharu hai. 3.
 nāma-sō na mātu-pitu, mīta-hita, bandhu-guru,
 sāhiba, sudhī, susīla, sudhākaru hai.
 nāmasōm̐ nibāha nēhu, dīnakō dayālu! dēhu,
 dāsatusīkō, bali; baḍō baru hai. 4.

Verse no. 255—Oh Lord Sri Ram (rāma)! For Sadhus (i.e. those who have a pious and pure heart) your majesty's holy Name is akin to a Kalpa Tree (rāvarō nāma sādhu-surataru hai) because as soon as it is remembered all the three types of legendary tormentors¹ that burn and horrify a person in this world are removed (sumirē tribidha ghāma harata).

Not only that, it is able to fulfil all the wishes of the person who remembers this holy Name and makes him fully contented (pūrata kāma).

Indeed, the Lord's holy Name is like a pond that is full of lotus flowers representing all the excellent qualities and virtues that are meritorious, righteousness, good and noble (sakala sukr̥ta sarasijakō saru hai).

[¹The three legendary tormentors are the following: Daihik—sufferings of the body; Bhautik—suffering related to worldly objects; and Daivik—suffering caused by angry Gods and stars. Refer also to verse no. 251, stanza no. 1 herein above in this Book.] (1).

The Lord's holy and divine Name is like a personified form of all the great benefits and gains and auspicious rewards that one can expect to get (in life by doing meritorious deeds and being righteous) (*lābhahūkō lābha*).

Likewise, it is the essence of happiness and comfort as it provides extreme solace and succour to the tormented soul (*sukhahūkō sukha*).

In brief, it is one single source that grants everything that one would expect in this world (*sarabasa*)².

[²To wit, for saintly persons and those who are enlightened, there is nothing bigger and more important than Lord Ram's holy Name as it gives them whatever they desire. The saints and devotees of the Lord have no greater benefit, no greater source of comfort, no solace or succour and no wealth that is more important and valuable than Lord Sri Ram's holy Name.]

It is the purifier of those who are impure (such as sinners and unrighteous persons—"patita-pāvana"); it instills fear in the heart of the Fear itself (*ḍarahūkō ḍaru hai*)³.

[³To wit, Lord Ram's holy Name is so potent and powerful that it not only decimates the sins of the sinners but also frees them from the horrifying consequences of their sins.]

It is easily accessible by all and meant for all—whether they be high or low in stature in this world, whether they are kings or paupers. Everyone can chant Lord Sri Ram's 'Name' and benefit from its holy vibrations (*nīcēhūkō ūm̐cēhūkō, raṅkahūkō rāvahūkō sulabha*)⁴.

[⁴This statement has a special relevance in the context of prevalent practice of disallowing some people from entering into temples or chanting Mantras and the holy name of the Lord, and even from reading the scriptures. Since every soul that resides inside the body of a living being is the same and a fraction of the Supreme Soul that is universal by nature, such practices are unjustified, below human dignity, abhorable and illogical. No one has the right to shut the door of God on anyone's face. Hence, Tulsidas alludes to this practice without directly denouncing it when he says that even the biggest of sinners, out-castes, lowly and even those who are castracised by the society have access to the Lord and his holy Name, that Lord lives in their heart, and he purifies them. Three cheers for Tulsidas, to say so!]

It provides happiness and comfort to all and is as cosy and comfortable as one's own little home (*sukhada āpanō-sō gharu hai*)⁵.

[⁵A person finds immense joy, happiness, freedom, satisfaction and security in his own home, whereas when he stays with others, he feels discomfort and unease. That little space which one calls one's home provides the same freedom of spirit that one finds in the lap of the Lord—because the Lord is the most loving parent of all living beings.] (2).

The Vedas, the Purans and Lord Shiva have loudly and repeatedly proclaimed that having love, affection and endearment for Lord Sri Ram's holy Name is the actual reward that one gets when one accesses the so-called four fruits⁶ of one's meritorious

deeds in life (vēda hū, purāna hū, purāri hū pukāri kahyō, nāma-prēma cāriphalahūkō pharu hai).

[⁶The four fruits of noble deeds are said to be the following: Artha—meaning financial well-being; Dharma—meaning acclaim for being noble and righteous; Kaam—meaning fulfilment of all desires; and Moksha—meaning attaining salvation and emancipation.]

If a person does not have in his heart, love, affection, faith and belief in such a glorious Name of Lord Sri Ram (aisē rāma-nāma sōm na prīti, na pratīti mana), then in my (Tulsidas') view, he should be regarded as nothing better than a donkey (mērē jāna, jānibō sō'i nara kharu hai). [He shall become a beast of burden, carrying the burden of miseries and torments for all times to come, without any sight of redemption. He shall suffer interminably due to his own foolishness, delusions and arrogance.] (3).

One's father and mother, friend and well-wisher, brother and teacher, master and lord—none of them can compare themselves with Lord Sri Ram's holy Name (nāma-sō na mātu-pitu, mīta-hita, bandhu-guru).

It is like a wise Lord who is extremely courteous and polite, and it is like the soothing balm of the rays of the moon (sāhiba, sudhī, susīla, sudhākaru hai)⁷.

[⁷To wit, as soon as it is remembered, it accepts the caller, eliminates his torments of all kinds, dispels all his fears just like a caring Lord and Master would do for his servant or dependant, and it soothes the agitated person's nerves just like the rays of the moon does. Further, the 'Name' of Lord Ram is better than the two benefactors cited here, i.e. one's benevolent Lord and the soothing Moon, because the solace and succour that the name provides is permanent, of a high quality, and eternal in nature. It gives spiritual bliss, beatitude and felicity that neither the Moon nor the worldly Lord can ever give.]

Oh merciful and kind Lord, have mercy on me (dīnakō dayālu)! I most humbly submit before you and request you to grant me a boon by which I would be able to have steady and everlasting love, faith and devotion in your holy name (nāmasōm nibāha nēhu dēhu).

Verily indeed, this humble Tulsidas asserts that Lord Ram's holy name is his greatest of strength and asset that sustains him (dāsatulasīkō, bali; barō baru hai) (4).

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Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras, Hymns & Prayers

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

Chapter 2

Lord Ram's 108 Divine Names from Padma Puran & Anand Ramayan, and their significance:

Lord Ram's holy 108 Names have appeared in the Padma Puran and the Anand Ramayan. These are two ancient scriptures where these names are enumerated—one is the Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, Canto 281, verse nos. 30-48, and the other is the Anand Ramayan, Purva Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 32-51. We shall read both of them for their magnificence, beauty, spiritual rewards and our knowledge of the divinity of Lord Ram who was none else but the Supreme Being himself manifested in his human form.

First we shall read the hymns of the Padma Puran, and then those of the Anand Ramayan.

At the end of this section we shall see the significance of the figure '108'.

(2.1) Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, Canto 281, verse nos. 30-48

Lord Ram's great 108 Names are enumerated in the Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, Canto 281, verse nos. 30-48. They were pronounced by Lord Shiva for the benefit of his divine consort goddess Parvati.

It so happened that once Lord Shiva invited goddess Parvati (pronounced as *Paar-vati*) to share their meal together on the summit of Mt. Kailash, which is the abode of Lord Shiva on earth. Parvati replied that she would eat only after she had paid her obeisance to Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, by using the Lord's one thousand divine Names. At this, Lord Shiva told her—'You are really blessed that you have so much devotion for Lord Vishnu. But I depend on Lord Ram's holy and divine Name 'Ram' for all my spiritual purposes, and for me this single name 'Ram' is equivalent to thousands of Lord Vishnu. So oh goddess, you can take this single name 'Ram' and feel rest assured that you would have taken the thousand holy and divine names of Lord Vishnu. Thus, say 'Ram' and come to share the meal with me.'

Parvati obeyed her husband's orders because she knew very well that there was no one more enlightened and wise than Lord Shiva in this creation, so he must be

correct. After meals, she said to Shiva—‘Oh Lord. You have said that the single name of Lord Ram, i.e. ‘Ram’, is equivalent to thousands of names of Lord Vishnu. This has aroused great faith in the holy name ‘Ram’ in me, and I wonder that if a single name is so powerful and profound, what would be the potential of other names of Lord Ram if one were to take all of them. It boggles my mind, and I am very eager to know the other holy names of the Lord. So Lord, if there are other such great names of the Lord, please tell me about them.’

Shiva replied—‘Alright. I shall tell you the other names of Lord Ram. Indeed, all the countless divine names of the Supreme Being as narrated in the Vedas as well as traditionally known by this world are different variations of the holy name of Lord Ram. Lord Ram also has one thousand names, but out of them there are one hundred eight names which have greater importance and are considered prominent. Even as each single name of Lord Vishnu has more divinity, blessedness and holiness than all the hymns of the Vedas put together, the single name ‘Ram’ of Lord Ram is regarded as being equivalent to thousands of holy names and hymns.

Oh Parvati! More powerful spiritual benefits are obtainable by doing Japa (repetition) of one single name ‘Ram’ than chanting all the hymns of the Vedas or repeating so many other names of different forms of the Supreme Being.

That said and done, now let me tell you (Parvati) the one hundred eight divine and holy names of Lord Ram which have been sung by great sages and seers.

ॐ श्रीरामो रामचन्द्रश्च रामभद्रश्च शाश्वतः । राजीवलोचनः श्रीमान् राजेन्द्रो रघुपुङ्गवः ॥ १ ॥

om śrīrāmo rāmacandraśca rāmabhadraśca śāśvataḥ/
rājīvalocanaḥ śrīmān rājendro raghupuṅgavaḥ// 1//

Line no. 1 =

(1) ॐ श्रीरामो ‘om śrīrāmo’—Salutations to Lord Ram who is the Supreme Being represented by the divine cosmic word OM. Lord Ram is the Lord God who is invoked by great sages and ascetics when they do meditation using this Mantra ‘OM’.

(2) रामचन्द्रश्च ‘rāmacandraśca’—Lord Ram is as beautiful, comforting, enchanting and soothing as the full Moon (Chandra). [Again, since the Moon is regarded as a heavenly pitcher of Amrit, the ambrosia of eternity and bliss, Lord Ram also provides the same benefits to his devotees and followers.]

(3) रामभद्रश्च ‘rāmabhadraśca’—The gentleman Lord Ram is extremely polite, courteous, affable and amiable.

(4) शाश्वतः । ‘śāśvataḥ/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who is eternal, absolute, truthful and universal.

(5) राजीवलोचनः ‘rājīvalocanaḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has eyes which are like the lotus flower. [Lord Ram’s eyes are as beautiful as the lotus flower.]

(6) श्रीमान् राजेन्द्रो 'śrīmān rājendro'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is endowed with all the grandeur, majesty, magnificence, authority, power and dignity that befits an Emperor. The Lord is an Emperor amongst Kings.

(7) रघुपुङ्गवः॥ 'raghupuṅgavaḥ// 1//—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the best in the race of kings of the Raghu dynasty (who ruled over the ancient kingdom of Ayodhya).

जानकीवल्लभो जैत्रो जितामित्रो जनार्दनः । विश्वामित्रप्रियो दान्तः शरण्यत्राणतत्परः ॥ २ ॥

om śrīrāmo rāmacandraśca rāmabhadraśca śāśvataḥ/
rājīvalocanaḥ śrīmān rājendro raghupuṅgavaḥ// 2 //

Line no. 2 =

(8) जानकीवल्लभो 'jānakīvallabho'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is most dear to Sita, known as 'Janki', the daughter of king Janak. [Sita, also known as Janki, was the divine consort of Lord Ram. She is known as 'Jaanki' or 'Janki' because she was the daughter of king Janak. 'Janki' = the daughter of Janak; Sita; 'Vallabho' = one who is very dear; a husband.]

(9) जैत्रो 'jaitro'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is always victorious and invincible.

(10) जितामित्रो 'jitāmitro'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a friendly conqueror. [The word implies that the Lord is not a ruthless, tyrannical and merciless conqueror who likes to spill blood of enemies. He is 'friendly' in the sense that if the opponent of the Lord pleads for mercy, the Lord goes all out to forgive him and accept him as one of his own subjects. 'Jita' = to win; 'Mitra' = a friend. 'A-mitra' = one who is not friendly.]

(11) जनार्दनः । 'janārdanaḥ/'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is merciful, benevolent, kind and gracious to all his subjects (i.e. the creatures of the world). He pays attention to their prayers and listens to them all compassionately. ['Jan' = the subjects of a king's realm; dependants; 'Aardan' = one who gives succour and relief from, or eliminates agonies, miseries and problems.

(12) विश्वामित्रप्रियो 'viśvāmitrapriyo'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is dear to sage Vishwamitra; or the Lord who is a friend ('Mitra') of the whole world ('Vishwa'). [Sage Vishwamitra was the one whose fire sacrifice was protected by the Lord from being defiled by the demons. The Lord was very dear to the sage, and it was this sage who was instrumental in the Lord's marriage with Sita at Janakpur.]

(13) दान्तः 'dāntaḥ'—The Lord (Sri Ram) has exemplary self-control or self-restraint over his sense organs. [There are said to be ten sense organs—five of perception and five of action. The five sense organs of perception are eyes which see, nose which smells, ears which hear, tongue which tastes, and skin which feels. The five sense organs of action are the hands which receive things and do deeds, the legs which take one to his destination, the mouth which helps one to speak and eat and drink, the

excretory which help to eliminate waste from the body, and the genitals which help to give pleasure as well as to reproduce. The mind is also sometimes regarded as one of the subtle aspects of the sense organs because it is the mind that controls everything. Hence, Lord Sri Ram has control over all of them.]

(14) शरण्यत्राणतत्परः ॥ ‘śaraṇyatṛāṇatātparaḥ// 2//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is always eager to and engaged in giving protection to those who have taken refuge or shelter with him. [‘Sharanya’ = to take shelter and refuge with someone, seeking his protection; ‘Traan’ = to remove or provide relief from torments, grief, pain and miseries; to grant protection, shelter, relief, security etc.; ‘Tatpar’ = to be eager, diligent, ever-ready and careful to do something.]

वालिप्रमथनो वाग्मी सत्यवाक् सत्यविक्रमः । सत्यव्रतो व्रतफलः सदा हनुमदाश्रयः ॥ ३ ॥

vālipramathano vāgmī satyavāk satyavikramah/
satyavrato vrataphalaḥ sadā hanumadāśrayah// 3//

Line no. 3 =

(15) वालिप्रमथनो ‘vālipramathano’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed (‘Pramathan’) the monkey named Vaali. [Vaali was the elder brother of Sugriv and the king of the monkey race. He had thrashed his younger brother Sugriv due to some misunderstanding and threw him out of the kingdom, thereby usurping his share and right to the throne of Kishkindha, the capital of the kingdom of monkeys. Not only this, Vaali had also kept Sugriv’s lawful wife as his mistress, a deed which is totally unethical. Lord Ram had slayed Vaali when Sugriv complained of the injustice that was done to him by his own brother. ‘Pramathan’ = to stir, churn, kill, destroy.]

(16) वाग्मी ‘vāgmī’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an expert orator, speaker and preacher; he is an expert with the use of words; his voice and speech are both pleasant and fit for the occasion. [It implies that Lord Ram is highly erudite, learned, wise and scholarly because he has to speak articulately and in a convincing manner. ‘Vaagmi’ also means that the Lord personifies the glorious virtues of knowledge, erudition and wisdom embodied in the form of goddess Saraswati, the patron goddess of these virtues. Lord Ram, being the Supreme Being, inspires goddess Saraswati to bless great souls of this creation with the grand virtues of wisdom, erudition and knowledge, which are then passed on by them for the benefit of the rest of this creation by expressing themselves with the help of wise words of wisdom. ‘Vaak’ = speech. ‘Vaagmi’ = eloquent, learned, well-spoken, wise in expression.]

(17) सत्यवाक् ‘satyavāk’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is always truthful, and he always speaks the truth. [‘Satya’ = truth, truthfulness; ‘Vaak’ = words, speech.]

(18) सत्यविक्रमः । ‘satyavikramah/’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is truly heroic, strong, invincible, powerful, valorous and valiant. (b) The Lord is truly a strong, powerful and invincible warrior. (c) The Lord is strong and powerful and effective in upholding the virtues of Truth, and he forcefully, authoritatively and powerfully enforces the

principles of Truth. He is always successful in doing it; he cannot be defeated in this (upholding Truth). [‘Vikram’ = heroic, having valour, valiant, possessing prowess, strength; to be excellent and best in any field, especially that which requires strength and valour.]

(19) सत्यव्रतो ‘satyavrato’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is steadfast in upholding the vows and the principles of ‘truthfulness’. The Lord not only resolutely follows the doctrine of Truth himself but has also taken the vow or has promised to ensure its enforcement in this creation. [‘Vrat’ = vow, promise, determination, resolution.]

(20) व्रतफलः ‘vrataphalah’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is like the auspicious reward got by doing all sorts of austerities, observing strict codes of conduct, and diligently following the laws of virtuousness, righteousness and probity. (b) The Lord is attained by doing these religious duties and keeping auspicious vows. [‘Vrat’ = vow, resolution, observation of religious duties and sacraments, undertaking austerities and undergoing suffering for some religious and noble cause. ‘Phal’ = fruit, reward, result, consequence.]

(21) सदा हनुमदाश्रयः ॥ ‘sadā hanumadāśrayah’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is a constant source of support and succour for Hanuman. (b) Hanuman always finds his constant succour and eternal refuge with the Lord (Sri Ram). [Hanuman was Lord Ram’s greatest devotee, and he was instrumental in the Lord’s victory over the demons at Lanka and recovery of Sita from the clutches of the demon king Ravana. Though depicted as being a monkey like the other companions of the Lord in the forest and his army, Hanuman was an exceptional case—he was very learned and wise. He spoke fluent Sanskrit, the classical language of ancient India at the time of his first meeting with Lord Ram at the foot of Mt. Rishyamook where the Lord had gone wandering in the search of Sita. Hanuman was the one who had made Sugriv and Lord Ram friends, he was the one who was chosen to go across the ocean to Lanka in search of Sita, he was the first messenger of the Lord who had settled scores with the demons in a token way by burning the city of Lanka and bringing the demon army to its heels, he was the one who had brought the herbs which helped revive Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram, when he fell unconscious in the battle at Lanka, and he was the one who had played a pivotal role in the Lord’s final victory over the demons. On more than one occasion, Lord Ram has himself praised Hanuman and said that he will never be able to repay his debts and obligations. ‘Sadaa’ = always; ‘Hanumad’ = pertaining or related to Hanuman; ‘Aasray’ = refuge, shelter, support, help, something or someone to fall back upon in distress and emergencies when one has no other means left.]

कौसल्येयः खरध्वंसी विराधवधपण्डितः । विभीषणपरित्राता दशग्रीवशिरोहरः ॥ ४ ॥

kausalyeyah kharadhvansī virādhavadhapandītaḥ/
vibhīṣaṇaparitrātā daśagrīvaśiroharaḥ// 4//

Line no. 4 =

(22) कौसल्येयः ‘kausalyeyah’—The Lord (Sri Ram) became a son of Kaushalya. [The reading of this verse shows that there is an element of wonder that the Supreme Being, the Supreme Lord of creation who is formless, without attributes, almighty, all-pervading and all-encompassing, should become a son of a human queen known as Kaushalya. The reason is that she had done severe penance in her previous life as Satrupa, who was the chaste wife Manu, the first male human being. Satrupa and Manu had both requested Lord Vishnu, the cosmic form of the Supreme Being who revealed himself before the couple, that they wished to have the Lord as their son. It was due to this boon that the Lord had granted to them at that time that he took birth as the son of Kaushalya, the chief queen of king Dasrath who was Manu in his previous life.]

(23) खरध्वंसी ‘kharadhvansi’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had crushed (vanquished, killed) the demon named Khar. [This incident happened in the forest known as Panchvati. A demoness known by the name of Supernakha got so infatuated at the beauty of Lord Ram that she assumed the form of a bewitching beauty and proposed marriage to Lord Ram. The all-knowing Lord saw her deceit, and had got her nose and ears chopped-off as a punishment. This enraged her brothers Khar and Dushan. The two demons gathered a huge army and rushed to avenge their sister’s deformation. It was in the ensuing battle that Lord Ram had killed Khar along with Dushan. ‘Khar’ = name of a demon; ‘Dhvansi’ = one who crushes, demolishes or destroys.]

(24) विराधवधपण्डितः । ‘virādhavadhapaṇḍitaḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had expertly killed the great demon named Viraadh. [This incident occurred in the dense and uninhabitable part of the forest as Lord proceeded ahead after his meeting with sage Atri. Viraadh was a formidable and horrifying demon with a colossus body, strong jaws and sharp teeth. As he approached the Lord, he was grabbing and eating countless wild elephants, buffaloes and lions; a number of human bodies were impaled on the trident lying on his shoulder. As soon as Viraadh appeared before the Lord he was killed. Viraadh immediately assumed a divine form and went to the heaven. In his previous life he was a semi-god known as Vimal-tejomaya Vidhyadhar. He had become a demon as the result of a curse of sage Durvasa. Upon being killed by Lord Ram he found liberation and deliverance from his sinful body of a demon and reverted to his original form. ‘Viraadh’ = a demon with this name; ‘Badh’ = kill; ‘Pandit’ = an expert.]

(25) विभीषणपरित्राता ‘vibhīṣaṇaparitrātā’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had protected Vibhishan (from the danger of his elder brother Ravana, the ferocious demon king of Lanka). [Vibhishan was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu. He had known that Lord Ram is no one else but Vishnu in a human form. He was kicked out by Ravana when he tried to persuade the latter to give Sita back to Lord Ram and avoid a ruinous war. So he joined Lord Ram and fought alongside the Lord in the epic war of Lanka. When the war was won by the Lord, Vibhishan was made the king of Lanka. ‘Paritrataa’ = one who provides freedom from torments and miseries.]

(26) दशग्रीवशिरोहरः ॥ ‘daśagrīvaśiroharaḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had cut-off the ten heads of Ravana (the demon king of Lanka). [The main purpose of Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as Lord Ram was to kill this cruel demon called Ravana. He had got ten

heads as a result of a boon granted by Lord Shiva who was pleased by his offering of his own head to the Lord during a fire sacrifice. Legend has it that inspite of being a demon, Ravana was well-versed in the scriptures and their philosophy. A close reading of the Ramayana shows that he had abducted Sita with the sole intention of getting himself killed by Lord Ram because he knew that it is the only way he can find Mukti (liberation and deliverance) from the sinful body of a demon. ‘Das’ = ten; ‘Greev’ = necks, implying heads; ‘Shir’ = heads; ‘Har’ = one who steals or takes away or dispossesses someone of his possession.]

सप्ततालप्रभेत्ता च हरकोदण्डखण्डनः । जामदग्न्यमहादर्पदलनस्ताटकान्तकृत् ॥ ५ ॥

saptatālaprabhettā ca harakodaṇḍakhaṇḍanaḥ/
jāmadagnyamahādarpadalanastāṭakāntakṛt// 5//

Line no. 5 =

(27) सप्ततालप्रभेत्ता ‘saptatālaprabhettā’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had cut seven coconut trees with a single arrow. [This allures to the incident when Sugriv, the monkey friend of Lord Ram, had asked the Lord to fell the seven coconut tree as a test to see if the Lord would be able to kill Sugriv’s brother and arch rival Vaali who had usurped the kingdom of Kishkindha from him and thrown him out into exile at Mt. Rishyamook. It so happened that Vaali used to shake these trees unnecessarily and fell their fruits. The sages who partook of these fruits got annoyed and had cursed Vaali that anyone who was able to fell these trees in one attempt would also be able to kill him. ‘Sapta’ = seven; ‘Taal’ = coconut tree; ‘Prabhettā’ = one who pierces.]

(28) हरकोदण्डखण्डनः । ‘harakodaṇḍakhaṇḍanaḥ/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had broken the bow of Lord Har (Shiva). [This refers to the bow-breaking ceremony at Janakpur. Lord Ram had married Sita by breaking this bow of Lord Shiva. ‘Har’ = Lord Shiva; ‘Kodanda’ = bow; ‘Khandan’ = to break.]

(29) जामदग्न्यमहादर्पदलन ‘jāmadagnyamahādarpadalana’—The Lord who had vanquished or crushed the extreme sense of ego, haughtiness and arrogance of sage Parashuram. [This refers to the same bow-breaking when the sage had come angrily to punish anyone who had broken Lord Shiva’s bow. Lord Ram had then subdued him politely. The sage was renowned as a very haughty and proud man who thought himself to be invincible and an arch enemy of the Kshatriya class, the warrior class, to which Lord Ram belonged. ‘Jamdagna’ = sage Parashuram; ‘Maha’ = great; ‘Darpa’ = arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, vanity, false pride, ego; ‘Dalan’ = to vanquish, crush, destroy, trample underfoot, eliminate, subdue.]

(30) स्ताटकान्तकृत् ॥ ‘stāṭakāntakṛt//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had brought about an end to (i.e. killed) the demoness named Tadka. [She was killed when she attacked Lord Ram, his brother Laxman, and sage Vishwamitra when the three were on the way to the sage’s hermitage from Ayodhya. ‘Taadka’ = a demoness; ‘Anta’ = to bring an end to, kill; ‘Krit’ = a deed or action, to do something, to bring about some happening to fruition.]

वेदान्तपारो वेदात्मा भवबन्धैकभेषजः । दूषणत्रिशिरोऽरिश्च त्रिमूर्तिस्त्रिगुणस्त्रयी ॥ ६ ॥

vedāntapāro vedātmā bhavabandhaikabheṣajāḥ/
dūṣaṇatrisīroriśca trimūrtistriguṇastrayī// 6//

Line no. 6 =

(31) वेदान्तपारो ‘vedāntapāro’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is beyond the reach of the Vedas. (b) The Lord who is an expert in the Vedas. [The Vedas are the most ancient scriptures of India. Originally they were one continuous chain of hymns meant primarily meant to be used during fire sacrifices. Later on sage Veda Vyas classified them into four categories according to the needs of the fire sacrifice. Thus now we have four Vedas known as the Rig/Rik Veda, Sam Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. The Yajur Veda is further divided into Shukla and Krishna branches. This name of the Lord has two meanings—one, it means that even the most ancient treatise on religion is unable to tell with certainty who is that Supreme Being to whom the hymns are being said and offerings are being made. And two, it means that Lord Ram is an expert in the most profound and esoteric knowledge contained in the Vedas. ‘Veda’ = the primary scriptures which are considered as the repository of knowledge; ‘Anta’ = end; ‘Paaro’ = to be beyond its reach.]

(32) वेदात्मा ‘vedātmā’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the soul (‘Atma’) representing the essence, the spiritual truth, and the great principles of religion taught by the Vedas. [Lord Ram is a personified form of the essence of the principal ancient scriptures known as the Vedas. Even as a body is dead without the soul, the Vedas would lose their meaning and relevance if the Lord is removed from them. All the Vedas preach about the Supreme Being who is none else but Lord Ram in his cosmic form.]

(33) भवबन्धैकभेषजः । ‘bhavabandhaikabheṣajāḥ/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is like the only remedy (‘Bheshaj’) for all ills created by this mundane and deluding world; it is the Lord who is the only medium by which one can find freedom from the fetters represented by this entangling and deluding world; the Lord helps one unshackle oneself from this world which is like a formidable bondage. Lord Ram is like an infallible herb that can cure all the ailments that afflict a creature because of his involvement in this world which is like a huge and abominable shackle. ‘Bhav’ = the world of delusions and entanglements; ‘Bhandha’ = fetter, shackle, bondage, slavery, to be tied down, entanglements, to be enmeshed in; ‘Bheshaj’ = medicine, herb, remedy, drug.]

(34) दूषणत्रिशिरोऽरिश्च ‘dūṣaṇatrisīroriśca’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an enemy (‘Ari’) of the two demons known as Dushan and Trishira. [These two demons had accompanied Khar to attack Lord Ram after the incidence of deformation of the demoness Supernakha. Refer name no. 23. The word ‘Ari’ means an enemy.]

(35) त्रिमूर्ति ‘trimūrti’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a personified form of the Trinity Gods—viz. Lord Brahma the creator, Lord Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Lord Shiva the concluder of creation. [‘Tri’ = three; ‘Murti’ = form, image.]

(36) स्त्रिगुण ‘striguṇa’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a foundation upon which all the three (‘Tri’) legendary and celebrated Gunas (qualities that govern all characteristic features in this creation) rest; the Lord is a personified form of the three Gunas. [These three Gunas are known as Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. They decide the character, the temperament, the inherent nature, the thought processes and the behaviour of all living beings in this world. The Sata Guna is the best, the Tama Guna is the worst, and the Raja Guna is the medium quality. Since the entire world is a revelation of the same Supreme Being known as Ram, it follows that the Lord also embodies these three Gunas because these Gunas are part of creation. In other words, whatever kinds of nature that exists in this creation is one or the other form of the Lord; there is nothing beyond it.]

(37) स्त्रयी ॥ ‘strayī’—The Lord who personifies the three Vedas, as well as all the three aspects of creation (such as the past, the present and the future). [‘Trayi’ = the three principle Vedas—the Rig/Rik Veda, the Sam Veda and the Yajur Veda.]

त्रिविक्रमस्त्रिलोकात्मा पुण्यचारित्रकीर्तनः । त्रिलोकरक्षको धन्वी दण्डकारण्यवासकृत् ॥ ७ ॥

trivikramastrilokātmā puṇyacāritrakīrtanaḥ/
trilokarakṣako dhanvī daṇḍakāraṇyavāsakṛt// 7 //

Line no. 7 =

(38) त्रिविक्रम ‘trivikrama’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had measured the entire creation/universe in three steps during his incarnation as Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant. [This is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. When Bali, the grandson of Prahalad for whom Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, conquered the entire world and deprived Indra, the king of Gods who ruled over the heavens, Vishnu had taken the dwarfish form of a Brahmin mendicant to retrieve the heaven for Indra when he was requested by Aditi, the mother of Gods, to do so. He approached Bali, who was famous for his charities, as a ‘Vaaman’ or a dwarf, and begged him for ground sufficient enough to be covered by his three small steps. When the unsuspecting Bali agreed, Vaaman measured the entire earth with one step, the heaven with the second step, and for the third step he measured Bali’s own head symbolizing the crown of the kingdom of Bali. He put his third step on Bali’s head and pushed the latter to the nether world. Hence, Vishnu is also called ‘Trivikram’—one who conquered the three worlds in three steps. But the Lord is so kind and gracious that he saw the injustice done to a magnanimous Bali who had been righteous and firm in his vow of making charity, and never rescinded on his commitments. So, the Lord made him the king of the nether world, and himself took up the job of protecting him there as his gatekeeper. This incarnation of Lord Vishnu is his fifth and followed the Nrisingh form which was the fourth. The idea behind this Vaaman incarnation is that even the most humble looking man, represented by the diminutive Vaaman in this story, can

indeed have the stupendous power of the Spirit that even the most powerful gods and kings lack.

Since the word ‘Tri’ means three, and ‘Vikram’ means one who has obtained victory convincingly, the term ‘Trivikram’ is used to mean Lord Vaaman as he had established his lordship over the three worlds by simply and literally walking or stepping over them.]

(39) त्रिलोकात्मा ‘trilokātmā’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Atma (soul) of the entire living creation consisting of the three worlds (‘Trilok’ = the terrestrial world, the subterranean world, and the heavens).

(40) पुण्यचारित्रकीर्तनः । ‘puṇyacāritrakīrtanaḥ/’—The divine deeds of the Lord (Sri Ram) are most auspicious and holy to narrate. [‘Punya’ = auspicious, holy and righteous deeds; ‘Charitra’ = deeds done by someone during his lifetime; his character, virtues, qualities and personality; ‘Kirtan’ = to sing aloud, applaud, praise publicly and laud someone’s greatness and great deeds vocally and articulately so that others can hear of them and join such applause.]

(41) त्रिलोकरक्षको ‘trilokarakṣako’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a protector of the three worlds [‘Trilok’— the terrestrial world, the subterranean world, and the heavens. ‘Rakshako’—one who protects.]

(42) धन्वी ‘dhanvī’—The Lord (Sri Ram) holds a glorious bow (in his hands). [‘Dhanush’, the bow, is called ‘Saarang’. ‘Dhanvi’ is the holder of this bow. Hence, it refers to Lord Vishnu who holds the Saarang bow. This bow is also known as the ‘Shaankhya Dhanush’. It was made from the bones of demon named Shaankhya-chuda after he was killed by Lord Shiva. According to *Krishna Upanishad* of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 23, the Saarang bow of Lord Vishnu stands for the Vaishnavi Maya which is the primary form of Maya closely associated with Vishnu. As a protector of the entire creation, Lord Ram—who is none else but Lord Vishnu himself, holds this bow to protect the entire creation.]

(43) दण्डकारण्यवासकृत् ॥ ‘daṇḍakāraṇyavāsakṛt/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had lived (‘Vaas’) in the forest called Danda-kaaranya and performed or did (‘Krit’) many mystical deeds there. [The Dandakaaranya was the most uninhabitable and fierce part of the forest. It was infested by demons and ogres. This forest was the area where Lord Ram had spent the major part of his forest exile, and it covers all the events as mentioned in the ‘Aranya kand’ of the epic Ramayana/Ram Charit Manas.

An interesting legend is associated with this forest. ‘Dandak’ was one of the hundred princes who were the sons of king Ikshvaku dynasty. Dandak was assigned to rule over this area. He was of a promiscuous nature and had once molested Arjaa, the daughter of his own Guru, moral preceptor and teacher, named Shukraachaarya. The Guru cursed him, and as a result the entire kingdom was decimated and reduced to an un-inhabitable and barren stretch of land. Since Dandak was the cause of this, the entire land was named after him to remind and warn the coming generation to be careful about what they do and how they behave. Since it was left alone from being overcrowded, sages, hermits and ascetics made it their home. Being thus blessed by their august presence, some of the curse was neutralized and it got the name

‘Janasthaan’—a place that was inhabited by Gyanis or learned and realised souls. According to modern historians, the area of modern India that falls around Nasik, a city along the western seaboard of the country, was the area called Danda-kaaranya in ancient times.]

अहल्यापावनश्चैव पितृभक्तो वरप्रदः । जितेन्द्रियो जितक्रोधो जितलोभो जगद्गुरुः ॥ ८ ॥

ahalyāpāvanaścaiva pitṛbhakto varapradah/
jitendriyo jita-krodho jitalobho jagadguruh// 8//

Line no. 8 =

(44) अहल्यापावनश्चैव ‘ahalyāpāvanaścaiva’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had made Ahilya ‘Paavan’ or pure and freed her from her curse. [This refers to the incident when the Lord had touched a rock with his feet while on the way to sage Vishwamitra’s hermitage. This rock was Ahilya, the wife of sage Gautam, who had been turned into this form due to the curse of the sage due to some misunderstanding. The touch of the dust of the Lord’s feet had freed her from this curse, and she resumed her divine form and went back to her husband.]

(45) पितृभक्तो ‘pitṛbhakto’—The Lord (Sri Ram) was very devoted (obedient) to his father (Dasrath). [To wit, Lord Ram had willingly gone to the forest for fourteen years of exile as his father had wished it to his step-mother Kaikeyi, without harbouring any sort of anger against this ridiculous mandate of his father or offering any resistance of any kind. ‘Pitri’ = related to one’s father; ‘Bhakta’ = one who is devoted to someone.]

(46) वरप्रदः । ‘varapradah/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) grants boons and blessings (to his devotees and followers). [‘Var’ = boons, blessings, grants, grace; ‘Prad’ = to give, bestow, grant, bless.]

(47) जितेन्द्रियो ‘jitendriyo’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has exemplary self-restraint over his sense organs. [‘Jita’ = to obtain victory; ‘Jitendra’ = one who has obtained such victory; ‘Indri’ = sense organs. Refer name no. 13.]

(48) जितक्रोधो ‘jita-krodho’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has conquered/vanquished anger; the Lord has obtained victory over anger and wrathfulness. [‘Jit’ = to conquer and obtain victory over; ‘Krodh’ = anger.]

(49) जितलोभो ‘jitalobho’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has conquered greed, desires, longings, avarice and rapacity; the Lord has overcome temptations for material things of the world and worldly gains, joys, pleasures and comforts. [‘Lobha’ = greed, avarice, rapacity.]

(50) जगद्गुरुः ॥ ‘jagadguruh//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the preceptor and moral guide (‘Guru’) for the whole world (‘Jagat’). [The Lord teaches the world the correct path of

auspiciousness, truthfulness, righteousness, probity and propriety by his own example.]

ऋक्षवानरसंघाती चित्रकूटसमाश्रयः । जयन्तत्राणवरदः सुमित्रापुत्रसेवितः ॥ ९ ॥

ṛkṣavānarasaṅghātī citrakūṭasamāśrayaḥ/
jayantatrāṇavaradaḥ sumitrāputrasevitaḥ// 9//

Line no. 9 =

(51) ऋक्षवानरसंघाती ‘ṛkṣavānarasaṅghātī’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had assembled, commanded and led an army of bears and monkeys. [This army accompanied the Lord from Kishkindha and helped him conquer Lanka and kill the demons led by Ravana to retrieve Sita who was abducted by this demon. The monkey army was led by Sugriv, the monkey king, and Jamvant, the bear king. ‘Riksha’ = bears; ‘Vaanaar’ = monkeys; ‘Sanghaati’ = a companion, a friend, an associate, an ally.]

(52) चित्रकूटसमाश्रयः । ‘citrakūṭasamāśrayaḥ/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had lived and had taken shelter in Chitrakoot (during his sojourn in the forest). [‘Chitrakoot’ was a pleasant area of the forest where Lord Ram lived before he entered the fearful area of the forest known as Dandakaaranya. Chitrakoot was where Bharat, his younger brother, had gone to try to persuade the Lord to come back to Ayodhya. In modern India it is in the central part of the country. ‘Aasray’ = to take shelter in, to live or dwell in; a dwelling place.]

(53) जयन्तत्राणवरदः ‘jayantatrāṇavaradaḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had granted pardon to Jayant and saved him from the fear of death that was tormenting him. [Jayant was a mischievous son of Indra, the king of Gods. Once he had wished to test the might of Lord Ram, and so had assumed the form of a crow and pricked at the feet of Sita. When the Lord saw blood oozing out of the wound, he plucked a reed and used it as an arrow to punish Jayant. The latter went all over the heaven seeking protection, but no one—even his father Indra, was able to give him any assurance against the wrath of Lord Ram. Finally, seeing him terrified, sage Narad (Naarad) advised him to go plead for mercy with the Lord himself. When Jayant came to seek pardon from Lord Ram, the Lord excused him and granted him immunity from death. But since his arrow could not be failed, the Lord decided to make Jayant blind in one eye. It is believed that all the crows became blind in one eye since then. This is also the reason why crows are regarded as bad and ugly birds who are meat eaters. ‘Jayant’ = the son of Indra; ‘Tran’ = to remove or provide relief from torments, grief, pain and miseries; to grant protection, shelter, relief, security etc.; ‘Varad’ = to grant, bless, give boon, to assure immunity from fear.]

(54) सुमित्रापुत्रसेवितः ॥ ‘sumitrāputrasevitaḥ//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) was faithfully and diligently served by the son of Sumitra (i.e. Laxman, his younger brother who accompanied the Lord to the forest). [‘Sumitra’ = the mother of Laxman; ‘Putra’ = son; ‘Sevit’ = served by.]

सर्वदेवाधिदेवश्च मृतवानरजीवनः । मायामारीचहन्ता च महाभागो महाभुजः ॥ १० ॥

sarvadevādhidevaśca mṛtavānarajīvanah/
māyāmāricahantā ca mahābhāgo mahābhujah// 10//

Line no. 10 =

(55) सर्वदेवाधिदेवश्च ‘sarvadevādhidevaśca’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Chief of all the Gods in this creation, he is superior to all of them and their Lord as he is the Supreme Being. [‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Dev’ = God, Lord; ‘Devaa-dhi-dev’ = superior to all the Gods.]

(56) मृतवानरजीवनः । ‘mṛtavānarajīvanah’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had granted fresh life to the monkeys who had died (during the war of Lanka). [‘Mrit’ = those who had died; ‘Vaanar’ = monkey; ‘Jivan/Jeevan’ = life.]

(57) मायामारीचहन्ता ‘māyāmāricahantā’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the demon Marich who had assumed a deceitful form (of a golden deer so that Ravana could steal Sita). [This incident happened in the part of the forest called Panch-Vati. Ravana was instigated by Supernakha, a demoness who was earlier deformed by Laxman on the instructions of Lord Ram when she tried to lure the Lord into having illicit relationship with her. He forced Marich to assume the form of a golden deer so attractive that it would motivate Sita to ask Lord Ram to bring it to her. Once the Lord went to capture it or hunt it down, Ravana got an opportunity to abduct Sita from the hermitage. Meanwhile, Lord Ram pursued Marich in the form of a golden deer and killed him. ‘Maya’ = deceitful, illusionary; ‘Maarich’ = a demon; ‘Hantaa’ = killer, slayer, eliminator, destroyer.]

(58) महाभागो ‘mahābhāgo’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is most fortunate, extremely lucky, and blessed with unmatched good fortunes. [‘Maha’ = great, immense, vast; ‘Bhaagya’ = good luck and fortune; ‘Bhaago’ = one who is fortunate and lucky.]

(59) महाभुजः ॥ ‘mahābhujah’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has long arms. [That is, the Lord has a long reach; there is nothing that he can’t do or achieve, and he gives immense protection to his devotees with his all-able and strong hands. ‘Maha’ = great, large, long, vast; ‘Bhuj’ = arms.]

सर्वदेवस्तुतः सौम्यो ब्रह्मण्यो मुनिसत्तमः । महायोगी महोदारः सुग्रीवस्थिरराज्यदः ॥ ११ ॥

sarvadevastutah saumyo brahmaṇyo munisattamah/
mahāyogī mahodārah sugrīvasthirarājyadah// 11//

Line no. 11 =

(60) सर्वदेवस्तुतः ‘sarvadevastutah’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is praised, respected, honoured, revered and lauded by all the Gods. [‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Dev’ = gods; ‘Stut’ = praised, lauded, honoured.]

(61) सौम्यो ‘saumyo’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is calm, poised, polite, civil and courteous.

(62) ब्रह्मण्यो ‘brahmanyō’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is dear to the Brahmins. [‘Brahmins’ are traditionally regarded as being learned and wise people. They are said to be ordained by the Creator to act as preachers and moral teachers and guides for the rest of the society.]

(63) मुनिसत्तमः । ‘munisattamah/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the best amongst the sages and seers. The Lord has all the best of the divine and the glorious virtues that great sages, hermits, seers and saints possess. [‘Muni’ = sages, hermits; ‘Sattam’ = the best.]

(64) महायोगी ‘mahāyogī’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a great ascetic and hermit. [‘Mahaa’ = great; ‘Yogi’ = ascetic, hermit.]

(65) महोदारः ‘mahodārah’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is most magnanimous, munificent, benevolent and gracious; the Lord gives freely, liberally, charitably, and without reservations or inhibitions or discrimination. [‘Maho’ = great; ‘Udaar’ = magnanimous, benevolent, charitable, kind, broad-hearted giver.]

(66) सुग्रीवस्थिरराज्यदः ॥ ‘sugrīvasthirarājyadah//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) gave a stable (unchallenged) kingdom to Sugriv (the monkey king of Kishkindha whose army had helped the Lord conquer Lanka and retrieve Sita). [‘Sugriv’ = the monkey king of Kishkindha; ‘Sthir’ = steady, constant, unmoving and established; ‘Raajyad’ = to give kingdom to, to establish someone as a king, to grant a kingdom.]

सर्वपुण्याधिकफलः स्मृतसर्वाधनाशनः । आदिपुरुषो महापुरुषः परमः पुरुषस्तथा ॥ १२ ॥

sarvapunyaādhikaphalah smṛtasarvāghanāśanaḥ/
ādipuruṣo mahāpuruṣaḥ paramaḥ puruṣastathā// 12//

Line no. 12 =

(67) सर्वपुण्याधिकफलः ‘sarvapunyaādhikaphalah’—The Lord (Sri Ram) embodies all the greatest of rewards/fruits (‘Phal’) obtainable by doing things that are righteous, auspicious and proper (known as ‘Punya’). [‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Punya’ = holy, auspicious and righteous deeds; ‘Aadhik’ = Punya etc., the highest or the best of results that can be obtained by doing the best kind of Punya and all such other acts and deeds that are good and right; ‘Phal’ = fruit, reward, result, consequences.]

(68) स्मृतसर्वाघनाशनः । ‘smṛtasarvāghanāśanaḥ/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) whose mere remembrance can destroy or eliminate all the gravest or densest of sins and their attendant greatest of misfortunes and punishment. [‘Smrit’ = to remember, invoke; ‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Ghan’ = dense, grave; ‘Naashan’ = destroy, eliminate.]

(69) आदिपुरुषो ‘ādipuruṣo’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the primary and the most ancient Male (cosmic Lord) of creation. [It is from this ‘Aadi Purush’ that the rest of the creation has come into being. He is also called the ‘Viraat Purush’—the Lord who is as vast as the creation, and who is all-pervading and all-encompassing in this creation. There was nothing before the Aadi Purush. ‘Aadi’ = from the beginning, primary, primordial, ancient, initial, commencement of creation; ‘Purush’ = Male.]

(70) महापुरुषः ‘mahāpuruṣaḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is great, exalted and a majestic Being; he is legendary, and a great and exalted Person; (literally a Male—a ‘Purush’, but implying the entire spectrum of the living world). [‘Mahaa’ = great; ‘Purush’ = Male.]

(71) परमः पुरुषस्तथा ॥ ‘paramaḥ puruṣastathā//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is established as the Supreme Being. [‘Param’ = supreme and most exalted; ‘Purush’ = Male.]

पुण्योदयो महासारः पुराणपुरुषोत्तमः । स्मितवक्त्रो मितभाषी पूर्वभाषी च राघवः ॥ १३ ॥

puṇyodayo mahāsāraḥ purāṇapuruṣottamaḥ/
smitavaktro mitabhāṣī pūrvabhāṣī ca rāghavaḥ// 13//

Line no. 13 =

(72) पुण्योदयो ‘puṇyodayo’—The Lord (Sri Ram) inspires or motivates goodness and auspicious virtues to arise, emerge, grow, develop and bloom. [‘Punya’ = auspiciousness and virtuousness; ‘Udaya’ = to rise, emerge.]

(73) महासारः ‘mahāsāraḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the greatest and the only essence of creation; the Lord is the only truthful principle of creation; the Lord is the essence of all spiritual pursuit and the teaching of the scriptures; the Lord is the essence of creation without which the creation would lose its meaning and existence; the Lord is the essence of all the teachings of the scriptures without which all these teachings would be meaningless. [‘Mahaa’ = great; ‘Saar’ = essence.]

(74) पुराणपुरुषोत्तमः । ‘purāṇapuruṣottamaḥ/’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is lauded, applauded, praised, recognized and honoured as being the most ancient Being, and as being the best amongst all the Gods mentioned in the Purans. (b) The Purans have recognized that the Lord is the best amongst all the Males (living beings) in this creation. [The term ‘Purshottam’ is usually employed to mean the Supreme Being known as Lord Vishnu whose incarnation is Lord Ram. The word ‘Puran’ has two meanings—one of course means ancient, and the other means a group of ancient

scriptures narrating mythological history. Therefore, both the above interpretations can be made. ‘Purhottam’ means ‘the best amongst all Males’. Since all the ‘Gods’ are also males, and they are all super-natural Beings who are superior to the human beings, it follows that Lord Ram is best amongst all these Gods also.]

(75) स्मितवक्त्रो ‘smitavaktro’—The Lord (Sri Ram) always has a sweet, pleasant, welcoming, reassuring and endearing smile on his lips. The Lord always speaks in a sweet and pleasant tone; he uses words that are soothing and pleasant to hear. [To wit, the Lord is very dear and pleasing to look at, and he is always cheerful, warm and welcoming in his gestures and words. ‘Smit’ = sweet, pleasant; ‘Vaktra’ = mouth.]

(76) मितभाषी ‘mitabhāṣī’—The Lord (Sri Ram) speaks little, moderately, and only when required. [‘Mit’ = moderate, sparingly, little; ‘Bhaashi’ = one who speaks, speaker.]

(77) पूर्वभाषी ‘pūrvabhāṣī’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the most ancient speaker (as he is the Supreme Being before whom no one spoke anything—simply because there was no creation and a speaker before him). [‘Purva’ = first, before, preceding; ‘Bhaashi’ = speaker.]

(78) च रघवः ॥ ‘rāghavaḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had taken a birth in the clan/dynasty of king Raghu (of Ayodhya).

अनन्तगुणगम्भीरो धीरोदात्तगुणोत्तरः । मायामानुषचारित्रो महादेवाभिपूजितः ॥ १४ ॥

anantagūṇagambhīro dhīrodāttagūṇottarah/
māyāmānuṣacāritro mahādevābhipūjitaḥ// 14//

Line no. 14 =

(79) अनन्तगुणगम्भीरो ‘anantagūṇagambhīro’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has measureless and countless virtues and qualities that are profound and great. He is tranquil, calm, serious, sober and earnest (in his demeanours and thoughts). [In spite of the Lord possessing great and profound good virtues, he is not showing them off or boasting of them. The Lord is not haughty or arrogant or egoist that he has such exemplary qualities in him. ‘Anant’ = without an end; ‘Guna’ = virtues and qualities; ‘Gambhir’ = dense, profound, serious, sober, tranquil and calm.]

(80) धीरोदात्तगुणोत्तरः । ‘dhīrodāttagūṇottarah’—The Lord (Sri Ram) possesses the grand virtues of steadiness, patience, courage and fortitude (‘Dhir’), is a liberal, charitable and magnanimous donor (‘Daataa’), and is beyond the tainting effects of the various Gunas (qualities—‘gunottar’).

(81) मायामानुषचारित्रो ‘māyāmānuṣacāritro’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had assumed the illusionary form of a human being, and behaved like one. [To treat Lord Ram as an

ordinary human being is therefore wrong, as this form is only an illusionary form created by the delusion-creating powers—called ‘Maya’—of the Supreme Being who has no forms. ‘Maya’ = delusions, illusions; ‘Maanush’ = man, human being, ‘Chaaritra’ = deeds done, life and character.]

(82) महादेवाभिपूजितः ॥ ‘mahādevābhipūjitaḥ//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is worshipped by the greatest of Gods; the Lord is worshipped by Lord Shiva known as Mahaa-deva. [‘Mahaa’ = great and most exalted; ‘Devaa’ = God; ‘Maha-dev’ = Lord Shiva who occupies an exalted position amongst the pantheon of Gods as he is regarded as very wise, enlightened and self-realised; ‘Pujita’ = worshipped.]

सेतुकृज्जितवारीशः सर्वतीर्थमयो हरिः । श्यामाङ्गः सुन्दरः शूरः पीतवासा धनुर्धरः ॥ १५ ॥

setukṛjjitavārīśaḥ sarvatīrthamayo hariḥ/
śyāmāṅgaḥ sundaraḥ śūraḥ pītavāsā dhanurdharaḥ// 15//

Line no. 15 =

(83) सेतुकृत ‘setukṛta’—The Lord (Sri Ram) built a bridge (over the ocean to cross over to Lanka). [‘Setu’ = bridge; ‘Krit’ = a deed or action.]

(84) ज्जितवारीशः ‘jjitavārīśaḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had conquered the Lord of rain (ocean). [‘Jit’ = to win, conquer, vanquish; ‘Vaarish’ = Lord of rain. The ocean is the ‘Lord of rain’ because it is from the ocean that the clouds derive their quota of rain. The water of the ocean evaporates due to the heat of the sun, and when this reaches higher atmosphere it cools down and condenses in the form of clouds. Without the ocean there will be no rain-bearing clouds simply because there will be no reservoir as large and vast and endless as the ocean to supply the clouds with their extraordinary large requirement of water molecules.]

{It will be pertinent to note here that we must read these two names together in order to make sense of them. These names refer to the event when Lord Ram had constructed the bridge over the ocean to reach Lanka to kill the fierce demons and retrieve Sita held captive by their king Ravana. The patron god of the ocean, known as ‘Vaarish’, would not give the Lord a passage inspite of the Lord’s earnest pleadings. So finally the Lord drew his bow and arrow to dry up the ocean. Then the ocean became terrified, and conceded to the Lord request. Thus the bridge was built by the Lord. This bridge symbolically implied the Lord’s victory over the ocean which was a formidable and horrifying obstacle to be overcome.

Now the meaning of the two names would become clear. They mean that—
‘The Lord tamed the ocean by constructing a bridge over it. The Lord overcame the formidable barrier created by the ocean that prevented him from crossing over to Lanka by constructing a bridge across it. The Lord literally became victorious by winning the war (‘Jit’) of attrition with the ocean (‘Vaarish’), which was stubborn and not allowing the Lord to cross over it so as to reach Lanka, by his magical deed or act (‘Krit’) of constructing a bridge (‘Setu’) across it (the ocean). }

(85) सर्वतीर्थमयो ‘sarvatīrthamayo’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an embodiment of all the holy pilgrim sites. The holy form of the Lord is equivalent to the holiness of all the pilgrim places taken together. [That is, the Lord is as holy as any holy site independently or all the holy sites taken together. Thus, if one takes refuge at the holy feet of Lord Ram, then he is deemed to have gone to a great religious place. All the goodness and spiritual welfare and benefits that can accrue to a person by visiting holy pilgrim places are also available to him if he takes refuge in the holy feet of Lord Ram. In this context, refer to Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 129 where sage Valmiki says the same thing. ‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Tirtha’ = pilgrim sites; ‘Mayo’ = like, equivalent to.]

(86) हरिः । ‘hariḥ/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) steals or takes away (all the vices, negative qualities, sins, evil, misfortunes and the like from his devotees so that they do not have to suffer their consequences). [‘Hari’ is a term applied to Lord Vishnu. It literally means one who steals. But it does not mean that the Supreme Lord steals valuables and material things from men; he is not a ‘thief’ or a ‘thug’. The Lord takes away vices and the like from his devotees so that they are rendered pure and holy.]

(87) श्यामाङ्गः ‘śyāmāṅgaḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has a form that is dark-complexioned. [The Lord has a dark-complexioned body like that of a rain-bearing cloud or that of the dark-blue sky. This colour has a metaphoric and symbolic significance. Lord Vishnu is the Supreme Being who is as vast, infinite, fathomless, formless, all-encompassing and all-pervading as the sky. He is the sustainer and protector of life in this creation like the rain which is like the nectar of life for the earth. The earth and all its life would parch to death if there was no rain. So this allusion to the colour of the rain-bearing cloud and the sky is used when referring to the complexion of the Lord. ‘Shyaam’ = dark, black, deep-blue, purple; ‘Ang’ = parts of the body.]

(88) सुन्दरः ‘sundaraḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is beautiful and charming in every conceivable respect, both in the spiritual sense as well as in the temporal sense.

(89) शूरः ‘śūraḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is brave, valiant and courageous.

(90) पीतवासा ‘pītavāsā’—The Lord (Sri Ram) wears a yellow coloured cloth called the Pitambar. [‘Peet’ = yellow; ‘Vaasa’ = cloth used to wrap the body.]

(91) धनुर्धरः ॥ ‘dhanurdharaḥ//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) holds a bow. [See name no. 42 also. ‘Dhanur’ = bow; ‘Dhar’ = to hold.]

सर्वयज्ञाधिपो यज्ञो जरामरणवर्जितः । शिवलिङ्गप्रतिष्ठाता सर्वाघगणवर्जितः ॥ १६ ॥

sarvayajñādhipo yajño jarāmarañavarjitah/
śivaliṅgapraṭiṣṭhātā sarvāghagaṇavarjitah// 16//

Line no. 16 =

(92) सर्वयज्ञाधिपो ‘sarvayajñādhipo’—The Lord (Sri Ram) presides over all fire sacrifices and other religious rituals. The Lord is the Supreme Deity to whom all the sacrifices are made and offerings meant for. [‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Yagya’ = fire and other religious sacrifices; ‘Dhip’ = presiding Lord or deity.]

(93) यज्ञो ‘yajño’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is himself a personified form of the fire sacrifice and other religious rituals. The Lord is as holy and pure as the sacrifice itself. [To wit, when one worships the sacred fire during the sacrifice, one is actually worshipping Lord Ram. It is Lord Ram who is worshipped through the offerings and oblations made during the fire sacrifice.]

(94) जरामरणवर्जितः । ‘jarāmaraṇavarjitah/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) does not become old, does not suffer from old age related problems such as the degeneration of the body, and he does not die. [This is simply because the Lord is eternal and imperishable. ‘Jaraa’ = old age; ‘Maran’ = death; ‘Varjit’ = is immune from, is prevented from.]

(95) शिवलिङ्गप्रतिष्ठाता ‘śivaliṅgapraṭiṣṭhātā’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had established and consecrated the Shiva Lingam (a symbol of Shiva). [This refers to the Shiva Lingam that Lord Ram had established before crossing the ocean to Lanka. This ‘Shiva Lingam’ is called ‘Rameshwaram’ after Lord Ram. It has two meanings—‘the Lord, Ishwar, of Ram—i.e. Lord Shiva whom Sri Ram himself worshipped’, and ‘the Lord (Shiva) whose Ishwar (Lord God) is none else but Sri Ram—i.e. Lord Shiva himself worships Lord Sri Ram’. Besides this Shiva-Lingam, Lord Ram had established a number of Shiva-Lingams when he became the King of Ayodhya after the conquest of Lanka. These two facts are narrated in Adhyatma Ramayan of Veda Vyas, in (i) Uddha Kand/Lanka Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-4; and (ii) Uttar Kand, Canto 4, verse no. 27 respectively. ‘Shiva-linga’ = a symbol or idol of Shiva; ‘Pratisthaata’ = one who establishes.]

(96) सर्वाघगणवर्जितः ॥ ‘sarvāghagaṇavarjitah//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is absolutely free from any kind of inauspiciousness, negativity, vices, sin and evil etc., no matter how grave and overbearing they may be. All such bad and lowly qualities in this creation, even of the most potent kind, are prevented from tainting the Lord in any way. He is immune from their influence and negative effects. [‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Agha’ = sins and negativity; ‘Ghan’ = density of quality; ‘Varjit’ = prevented, immune, prohibited.]

परमात्मा परं ब्रह्म सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः । परं ज्योतिः परं धाम पराकाशः परात्परः ॥ १७ ॥

paramātmā param brahma saccidānandavigrahaḥ/
param jyotiḥ param dhāma parākāśaḥ parātparaḥ// 17//

Line no. 17 =

(97) परमात्मा ‘paramātmā’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Supreme Atma, the Supreme Soul, the Supreme Being, and the Supreme Lord God of creation. He is the transcendental Atma or the transcendental Being. [‘Par’ = supreme and transcendental; ‘Atma’ = soul.]

(98) परं ब्रह्म ‘param brahma’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Supreme Being in this creation who is known as ‘Brahm’. [The word ‘Brahm’ refers to the cosmic Consciousness and also as Pranav and OM. Brahm is uniform, all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent and supreme universal Truth of existence. Everything has come into being from Brahm and would finally merge into Brahm. This term is used extensively in the Upanishads to imply the cosmic Consciousness known as the Parmaatma or the Supreme Being.]

(99) सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः । ‘saccidānandavigrahaḥ/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a personified form or an image or an embodiment (Vigraha) of ‘truth’ (Satya), ‘consciousness and enlightenment’ (Chid), and their attendant ‘bliss and beatitude’ (Anand). [‘Saccha’ = true; ‘Chid’ = consciousness; ‘Anand’ = bliss; ‘Vigraha’ = image, form, idol.]

(100) परं ज्योतिः ‘param jyotiḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an embodiment of supreme light; the Lord is the ‘supreme source of light’ that illuminates everything in this creation. [The word ‘Param’ implies something that is supreme, the most magnificent, the highest and the best. The word ‘Jyoti’ means ‘light’. Therefore the meaning is that the Lord is the supreme source of all knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment that illuminates the world by removing the darkness of ignorance. It is a metaphoric term to also mean a supreme entity that injects life (represented by light) into the otherwise lifeless world (represented by darkness).]

(101) परं धाम ‘param dhāma’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the ultimate destination and abode for the soul of the creature; he is the final destination where all those who want to go to heaven reach; he is the final resting place for the entire creation and its creatures. [‘Param’ = supreme; ‘Dhaam’ = abode.]

(102) पराकाशः ‘parākāśaḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is like the transcendental space that fills what is commonly known as the sky; the cosmic sky; the great ‘sky element’. To wit, the Lord is like the deep recesses of the cosmos or the sky (‘Akash’) which is vast, fathomless and endless, is without any attributes, is taintless, uncorrupt, all-pervading, all-encompassing and all-including. The Lord is subtler than the sky which is the subtlest of the five elements (the other elements being air, fire, water and earth). The Lord is beyond the extent of the sky, and surrounds the sky from the outside. [‘Paraa’ = transcendental, beyond, out of reach; ‘Akaash’ = sky.]

(103) परात्परः ॥ ‘parātparaḥ//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is transcendental and supreme. There is nothing beyond the Lord. He is beyond the reach and purview of the perception of the sense organs as well as of the mind and the intellect.

परेशः पारगः पारः सर्वभूतात्मकः शिवः । इति श्रीरामचन्द्रस्य नाम्नामष्टोत्तरं शतम् ॥ १८ ॥

गुह्याद्गुह्यतरं देवि तव स्नेहात् प्रकीर्तितम् ॥ १९ ॥ (पद्म० उत्तर० २८१। ३०—४८)

pareśaḥ pāragah pārah sarvabhūtātmakah śivah/
iti śrīrāmacandrasya nāmnāmaṣṭottaram śatam// 18//
guhyādguihyataram devi tava snehāt prakīrtitam// 19 //

[Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, 281/30—48.]

Line no. 18 =

(104) परेशः ‘pareśaḥ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the supreme Lord. The Lord Sri Ram is the supreme and the best ruler. [‘Par’ = supreme and transcendental; ‘Ish’ = lord.]

(105) पारगः ‘pāragah’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) helps all the creatures to cross this world of transmigration and delusions. (b) The Lord helps everyone to cross the ocean of miseries, sins and misfortunes.

(106) पारः ‘pārah’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is transcendental and established beyond everything else in this creation.

(107) सर्वभूतात्मकः ‘sarvabhūtātmakah’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Atma (soul; the consciousness) that lives in the bosom of all living creatures. The Lord has revealed himself as the Atma of all living beings. All mortal creatures are a form of the Lord. The mortal living beings are different images of the same Lord who has revealed himself in all their forms. (b) The Lord is revealed in the form of all the primary elements of creation known as the Bhuts; he is the essence of these elements. [The mortal creatures are called ‘Bhut’ because they are mortal, are subject to death, and are not the truth of creation like the phantom or the ghost which are illusionary by nature and have no real existence. The other meaning of the term ‘Bhut’ is the element. There are said to be five primary elements in creation from which the rest of the visible creation was moulded by the supreme Creator. These elements are sky, air, water, fire and earth. All living beings have their gross physical body made out of these five elements. ‘Sarwa’ = all; ‘Bhut’ = ghost, phantom, primary elements of creation, mortal living beings; ‘Bhutaatmak’ = in the form of the Atma or soul or consciousness or essence or the fundamental basis of these Bhuts.]

(108) शिवः । ‘śivah/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is holy, beautiful, truthful, eternal, enlightened, wise, and consciousness personified. [The word ‘Shiva’ pertains to all these eclectic virtues at once.]

Line no. 18-19: Lord Shiva said to Parvati—‘So concludes the one hundred divine Names of Lord Ramchandra. Goddess (Parvati), these are very esoteric, mystical and enigmatic by nature, but out of my affection for you I have divulged them to you.’

[Padma Puran, Uttar Khand, Canto 281, verse nos. 30-48.]

Then Lord Shiva told Parvati that anyone who devotedly does Japa with these names, or remembers them, is liberated from the bad effects of countless sins that he may have committed in as many countless previous lives. And therefore he becomes eligible for obtaining emancipation and salvation.

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(2.2) Anand Ramayan, Purva Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 32-51

श्रीरामशतनामस्तोत्र

शम्भुरुवाच

राघवं करुणाकरं भवनाशनं दुरितापहम् । माधवं खगगामिनं जलरूपिणं परमेश्वरम् ॥ १ ॥

śrīrāmaśatanāmastotra

śambhuvāca

rāghavaṁ karuṇākaraṁ bhavanāśanaṁ duriṭāpaham/
mādhavaṁ khagagāminaṁ jalarūpiṇaṁ parameśvaram// 1//

Line no. 1—

(1) राघवं ‘rāghavaṁ’—Lord Sri Ram who took birth in the clan/dynasty of king Raghu (of Ayodhya).

(2) करुणाकरं ‘karuṇākaraṁ’—Lord Sri Ram is merciful and compassionate.

(3) भवनाशनं ‘bhavanāśanaṁ’—Lord Sri Ram destroys the world of delusions. [‘Bhav’ = the mortal world of transmigration and delusions with its characteristic problems and sufferings; ‘Naashnam’ = one who destroys.]

(4) दुरितापहम् । ‘duriṭāpaham/’—Lord Sri Ram devours sins and evils swiftly, along with the torments and miseries created by them. [‘Durit’ = quickly; ‘Taap’ = torments created by sins.]

(5) माधवं ‘mādhavaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who is known as Maadhav. [‘Maadhav’ is an epithet for Lord Vishnu. It commemorates the slaying of the demon named Madhu by the Lord. The legend associated with this killing is that two demons named

Madhu and Kaitav had tried to kill Brahma, the creator. Then Lord Vishnu had fought and killed them. This story appears in Devi-Bhaagwat Puran, 1.4.9.]

(6) खगगामिनं ‘khagagāminam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who travels astride the Bird (known as Garud—the legendary Heron or Eagle). [This refers to Lord Vishnu who rides on Garud. ‘Khag’ = bird; ‘Gaamin’ = to travel.]

(7) जलरूपिणं ‘jalarūpiṇam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who is established in the form of the water. [This implies that the life-giving water possesses this quality because the Lord is present in it in a subtle form. Left to its own account water is a gross element. But the fact that it harbours life and is the nectar of life is due to the subtle presence of the Supreme Being in it. The Lord imparts the water its life sustaining and fostering capabilities. ‘Jal’ = water; ‘Rupinam’ = in the form of.]

(8) परमेश्वरम् ‘paramēśvaram// 1//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Supreme Lord. [‘Param’ = Supreme; ‘Ishwar’ = Lord.] ॥ १ ॥

पालकं जनतारकं भवहारकं रिपुमारकम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ २ ॥

pālakaṁ janatāraṁ bhavahāraṁ ripumāraṁ/
tvāṁ bhaje jagadīśvaraṁ nara-rūpiṇaṁ raghunandanam// 2//

Line no. 2—

(9) पालकं ‘pālakaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the sustainer, protector, caretaker and nourisher of this creation.

(10) जनतारकं ‘janatāraṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) provides liberation and deliverance to even the ordinary living beings who are subjects of his creation. The Lord helps the ordinary creature to get across this ocean-like world of transmigration and delusions. [‘Jan’ = public, common man, subjects of a kingdom; ‘Taarak’ = one who takes across, one who gives freedom from bondage and the entangling web of this world.]

(11) भवहारकं ‘bhavahāraṁ’ —The Lord (Sri Ram) removes all the spiritual fetters or hurdles created by this world of delusions and transmigration of soul, a world which is like a web of birth and death along with their attendant troubles and miseries. [‘Bhava’ = the world of delusions and transmigration with their characteristic problems and sufferings; ‘Haarakam’ = one who removes or eliminates.]

(12) रिपुमारकम् । ‘ripumāraṁ’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) kills or crushes one’s enemies. [Here meaning that the Lord Sri Ram removes all sources of torments, horrors and miseries that terrify his devotees or those who seek shelter with him. ‘Ripu’ = enemy; ‘Maarakam’ = one who kills.]

(13) त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं ‘tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram’—Oh Lord (Sri Ram), I worship, revere, adore, honour, pray and pay my obeisance to you who are the Lord God of the entire world (creation). [‘Twam’ = you; ‘Bhaje’ = worship, pray, adore, pay obeisance; ‘Jagdishwar’ = Lord of the world.]

(14) नररूपिणं ‘nara rūpiṇam’—The Lord (i.e. the Supreme Being known by the name of Sri Ram) is in the form of a human being. [‘Nar’ = man, human being; ‘Rupinam’ = in the form of.]

(15) रघुनन्दनम् ‘raghunandanam// 2//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is born as a son in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty (of Ayodhya). [‘Raghu’ = an ancient of the kingdom of Ayodhya; ‘Nandanam’ = a son.] ॥ २ ॥

भूधवं वनमालिनं घनरूपिणं धरणीधरम् । श्रीहरिं त्रिगुणात्मकं तुलसीधवं मधुरस्वरम् ॥ ३ ॥

bhūdhavaṁ vanamāliṇaṁ ghanarūpiṇaṁ dharaṇīdharam/
śrīharaṁ triguṇātmakaṁ tulasīdhavaṁ madhurasvaram// 3//

Line no. 3—

(16) भूधवं ‘bhūdhavaṁ’—He (Sri Ram) is the Lord (emperor; king) of the whole earth, and has sway over its realm. [‘Bhu’ = earth; ‘Dhavam’ = lord, master.]

(17) वनमालिनं ‘vanamāliṇaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) wears a garland of flowers that is called the Vanmaala. [The Vanmaala is a garland worn by Vishnu which is made of flowers of the wild forest (Van). The flowers of the garland are of a wide variety with those of the Kadamba tree (*Nauclea cadamba*) being in its centre, or being the dominant ones. Sometimes, marigold, daisy or xanthium flowers are shown as being used in this garland.]

According to the Atharva Veda tradition’s Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 40, the Vanmaala is a symbolic representation of the primary Maya (delusion creating powers of Brahm) which itself has no birth (because it is an integral part of Brahm which has no birth or beginning). This is why your (Brahma’s) mental-born sons (such as Sankaadi) call ‘Avidya’ (ignorance having its genesis in Maya or delusions) a form of garland around my neck.

This world is revealed from the Viraat Purush, the primary and primordial form of Vishnu. This world is characterized by a the dominance of ignorance that prevents the creature from being aware of the actual ‘truth’ of creation and his own ‘self’, thereby forcing him to remain trapped in this cycle of birth and death, and suffering from their accompanying horrors and agonies. This is due to the influence of Maya which acts like a millstone around the neck of the creature. Hence, the metaphor of the garland symbolizing Maya and Avidya around the neck of Vishnu is cited here because of the simple reason that the Viraat Purush has revealed himself as the creature, and Maya acts like a millstone that is worn like a garland around the neck of this creature.

The garland is also a metaphor for the stupendous responsibility that Lord Vishnu has as the care-taker, sustainer and protector of this creation created by Maya. This world is like a mill-stone around the Lord's neck, a bridle or a throat-latch which he carries with pleasure and without complaining at all.

Since the world is such a beautiful and enchanting place for the reason that it is created by Maya, this garland is also depicted as being bewitchingly beautiful just like the fascinating world it has managed to create.

This world is created by Maya, the power of the Lord to conjure up an extremely fascinating world from nothing, something which is not the reality, and is therefore deluding for those who think it to be real. The magic is that the Lord manages to maintain a fine balance between the two—he helps the Maya to perpetrate this creation, and at the same time keeps tight leash on its vagaries.

The garland is like an honour bestowed upon the Lord to mark the fact that the Lord has most expertly, avidly, diligently and wisely taken good care of the world with all its diversities and incongruities created by Maya, without ever complaining or failing in his duties, but miraculously remaining free from the effects of delusions that this Maya creates in this world.

From the perspective of the creature, if he falls in the trap of the attractions of the fascinating world around him, a world created by Maya, he wears this symbolic garland of Maya around his own neck that would act as a heavy burden on his chest. On the other hand, if he is wise and erudite to remain detached from the world inspite of doing his assigned duties diligently, he would be like Lord Vishnu himself. The former type of creature is trapped in this world of delusions, while the latter type is said to be spiritually liberated and delivered.]

(18) घनरूपिणं 'ghanarūpiṇam'—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is a personified form or a treasury of all the greatest of virtues and glories. (b) The Lord (Sri Ram) has a form that is dark as the rain-bearing cloud. ['Ghan' = dense, concentrated, treasury; rain-bearing dark clouds; 'Rupinam' = having a form like it.]

(19) धरणीधरम् । 'dharanīdharam/'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the one who bears the burden of the earth; the Lord supports, protects and nourishes the earth and the entire gamut of life on it and inside it. ['Dharni' = earth; 'Dharanam' = one who holds.]

(20) श्रीहरिं 'śrīharim'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is none else but Lord Vishnu who is known as Sri Hari. [This is because the word 'Sri' refers to goddess Laxmi, the patron goddess of wealth and prosperity, who is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, and the word 'Hari' relates to Lord Vishnu himself. The Lord is called 'Hari' because he literally steals or removes or snatches all the miseries, grief, pain, troubles and misfortunes of his devotees and followers, and makes them happy and free from worries. "Sri" = well-being, prosperity, majesty and achievements; "Hari" = one who steals or eliminates or removes.

Another interpretation of the term 'Sri-Harim' is that Lord Ram has all the majesty, magnificence and glory that exist in this creation as the Supreme Lord of this world. At the same time, Lord Ram removes all the pain, misfortunes, miseries and grief of his devotees.]

(21) त्रिगुणात्मकं 'triguṇātmakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) embodies all the three Gunas in this creation. [The three Gunas are Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna. These

‘Gunas’ are the inherent qualities and virtues that are present in all the living beings in this creation, and they determine the character and nature of all individuals. Since this entire creation is a revelation of the same Supreme Being, since everything that exists has its origin in the Supreme Being, and since the Supreme Being pervades uniformly throughout this creation—it follows that these three Gunas are also a part of the Supreme Being known as Lord Sri Ram. It is through these three Gunas that the Supreme Being controls the functioning of the entire world. “Tri” = three; “Guna” = basic qualities or attributes of creation.]

(22) तुलसीधरं ‘tulasīdharaṁ’—He (Sri Ram) is the Lord (husband) of Tulsi. [It is the holy Basil plant which is regarded as very sacred by the followers of Lord Vishnu (i.e. the Vishnu cult called the Vaishnavs). Its botanical name is *Ocimum sanctum*. It is said to have been born out of the tears of bliss and happiness of Lord Vishnu at the time when the pitcher containing the Amrit, the ambrosia of bliss and eternity, had emerged from the ocean when the latter was churned by the gods and the demons. The leaves of this plant are used to sanctify food offered to Lord Vishnu, and the dried wood of the tree is used for fire sacrifices, during cremation rites and also for making beads of the prayer rosary. In a personified form, Tulsi is regarded as a goddess very dear to Vishnu.

According to another legend, there was a demon named Jaalandhar who had a chaste wife named Brindaa. Lord Shiva had tried his best to kill him but failed due to the spiritual powers of his wife Brindaa. At that time Lord Vishnu had broken her vows of chastity by stratagem, and when Brindaa came to know about it she cursed Vishnu that he would become a stone. Vishnu accepted the curse with respect because he knew that Brindaa was immaculate and was not at fault, but it was necessary to violate her vows so that her cruel demon husband could be killed. So instead of counter-cursing or showing his wrath, Vishnu blessed her and said that even in his form as a stone he would still have the greatest of respect for her and keep her over his head as a token of this. Vishnu thus became a stone known as ‘Shaligraam’ and Brindaa became the Tulsi plant whose leaves are always placed on the top of the Shaligraam to worship the Lord.

According to the Shiv Puran, Rudra Sanhita, Khanda 5 (Uddha Khanda), Cantos 36-40, there was a demon named Shankha-chud, and his chaste wife was called Tulsi. Lord Shiva as well as the great goddess of death Mahakaali had tried their best to slay this demon, but were unsuccessful. It was then that Lord Vishnu had made Tulsi fall from grace by some trick so that ultimately Shiva, as Rudra, was able to kill him. When Tulsi came to know about the trick played upon her by Vishnu, she cursed him to become a stone. Lord Shiva counter-cursed her that she would become a river known as ‘Gandaki’. But Lord Vishnu intervened and forgave her, and said that he willingly accepts her curse as well as her as his symbolic consort. So it happened that Vishnu became a stone known as ‘Shaaligram’ that is found in this river, and Tulsi became a tree that grew on its bank. The leaves of this ‘Tulsi’ tree is regarded as the only thing that is acceptable to Lord Shaaligram—a metaphoric way of saying that Lord Vishnu can only be pleased by the touch of Tulsi.]

(23) मधुस्वरम् ‘madhurasvaram’// ३//—The Lord (Sri Ram) has a sweet and pleasant voice and speech. He talks pleasantly and courteously. [‘Madhu’ = sweet; ‘Swaram’ = tone of voice.]॥ ३॥

श्रीकरं शरणप्रदं मधुमारकं व्रजपालकम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ ४ ॥

śrīkaraṁ śaraṇapradam madhumāraṁ vrajapālakaṁ/
tvām bhaje jagadīśvaraṁ nararūpiṇaṁ raghunandanam// 4//

Line no. 4—

(24) श्रीकरं ‘śrīkaraṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the one who provides or creates ‘Sri’—i.e. he is the Lord who bestows all prosperity and successes, as well as all the majesty, grand virtues and magnificent glories that are obtainable in this world. [‘Sri’ = worldly achievements, glory, majesty, prosperity and welfare; ‘Karam’ = one who does something or brings about some happening.]

(25) शरणप्रदं ‘śaraṇapradam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) gives or grants refuge and shelter as well as protection to all those who seek it in his holy feet. [‘Sharan’ = to seek shelter or refuge at someone’s feet for protection; ‘Pradam’ = to grant or give.]

(26) मधुमारकं ‘madhumāraṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the demon named Madhu. [The legend associated with this killing is that two demons named Madhu and Kaitav had tried to kill Brahma, the creator. Then Lord Vishnu had fought and killed them. This story appears in Devi-bhaagwat Puran, 1.4.9. ‘Madhu’ = name of a demon; ‘Marakam’ = one who killed.]

(27) व्रजपालकम् । ‘vrajapālakaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had protected and taken care of the residents of Vraj (Brindaavan). [This refer to Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as Lord Krishna. The Lord had protected the residents of Brindaavan against the tyranny of Kansa. ‘Vraj’ = the place where Lord Krishna spent his childhood days; ‘Paalakam’ = the one who protects and sustains.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ‘tvām bhaje jagadīśvaraṁ nararūpiṇaṁ raghunandanam// 4//’—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 2.] ॥ ४ ॥

विठ्ठलं मथुरास्थितं राजकान्तकं गजमारकम् । सन्नुतं बकमारकं वृषघातकं तुरगार्दनम् ॥ ५ ॥

vitthalaṁ mathurāsthitaṁ rajakāntakaṁ gajamāraṁ/
sannutaṁ bakamāraṁ vṛṣaghātaṁ turagārdanam// 5//

Line no. 5—

(28) विठ्ठलं ‘vitthalaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is also known as Vitthal. [Lord Vitthal, also known as Panduranga, is a form of Lord Vishnu that is worshipped in the south of India, especially in the south-western state of Maharastra in a district known as

Sholapur. This idol has its chief seat in a town by the name of Pandharapur. It is situated in the confluence of the two rivers Bhima and Chandrabhaga.

The image is depicted as standing on a brick, with the hands on the waist.

The legend associated with this form of the Lord is briefly as follows—Long ago, in a small village named Lohadandapur, a son was born to a Brahmin family. He was brought up well and married to a lovely and cultured girl, but was wayward in his behaviour. In order to constant reprimands from his parents, he separated from them and went away with his wife. Heartbroken, the parents decided to go on a pilgrim to Varanasi, the worldly abode of Lord Shiva. Hearing this, Pundalika Vitthal also decided to go to Varanasi. He hired a horse and travelled in comfort. En-route, he met his aged parents trudging on foot, but he ignored them.

It so happened that on the way he came to a hermitage of sage Kukkuta, and asked him the way to Varanasi. The sage neglected him. Pundalika was annoyed, and wandered around the hermitage when he saw three unkempt women entering the place and cleaning it with their open hairs. When they came out, they were transformed into well-groomed and radiant women. Awe-struck at this wonder, Pundalika asked them for an explanation. They said that they were personified forms of the three holy rivers, Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati. They are constantly being polluted by sinful people taking a dip in them, and therefore once in a while they come here to get their purity restored. Asked how the sage gets this mystical power, the three women replied that it is because the sage serves his old parents with great devotion.

A thunderbolt literally struck Pundalika. He went in and prostrated before sage Kukkuta, and retraced his step to where his old parents were trudging towards Varanasi. Pundalika spent the rest of the years serving his parents with the greatest of love and devotion, taking them to pilgrim places and taking care of their needs with the greatest of diligence.

Lord Narayan (Vishnu) was very pleased with his devotion for his parents, and one day he decided to visit his home to see personally how he serves his parents. When the Lord came, Pundalika was busy serving his parents, and he did not pay much attention to the Lord except to gesture him to be seated on a slab of stone. The Lord however was extremely pleased, and he watched in fascination how Pundalika was going about his duties. The Lord was smiling, and his hands were on his waist as he watched.

It is believed that Lord Narayan was so transfixed with this show of love by Pundalika that he became meditative, and forever became immobile—like a ‘stone’. Since the Lord had manifested himself because of Pundalika, the latter’s name was added to the name of Lord Narayan.

The word ‘Panduranga’ in Marathi means ‘white’ though Lord Vishnu is known to have a dark complexion like that of a rain-bearing cloud or that of the sky, as also the fact that the image is also made of dark black stone. The reason is that ‘white’ is a colour of purity and holiness, as well as that of Sata Guna, the best of the three Gunas.

Another reason is that it is believed that earlier Lord Shiva was worshipped here, and since Shiva smears the ash of the fire sacrifice on his body because he is depicted as an ascetic, the complexion of his body is ‘white’ or grey like that of the ash.

The word ‘Vit’ in Marathi language spoken in that part of India means ‘a brick’, and ‘Tthala’ means ‘to stand’. Therefore, the Lord who stands on a brick, and is immobile like a stone, is called ‘Vitthal’.

Vitthal is also said to incorporate all the three gods of the Trinity—Brahma the creator who is represented by the word ‘Vi’ derived from ‘Vidhi’—the god who decides destiny, ‘Ttha’ for Lord Shiva who is also known as *Neelkantha*, the Lord with a blue-purple neck, and ‘La’ referring to Lord Vishnu who is the husband of *Laxmi*, the goddess of prosperity and wealth.

The combined name of this revelation of Lord Vishnu thus came to be known as ‘Pandulika Vitthal’.

There is a legend behind the brick too. Earlier, when the king of gods, Indra, has killed the demon Vrittasur with his weapon known as Vajra, the demon cursed him to become a stone. Indra rushed to Lord Vishnu to do something to save him. The Lord told him that the curse cannot be avoided, but Indra should go to Pandharpur and become a brick there till the time the Lord would come personally to provide him liberation from this curse by the touch of the dust of his holy feet. It was the same brick that Pundalika had offered to Lord Narayan to be seated. Thus, with the touch of Lord Vishnu’s holy feet, Indra was freed from his curse.

Now a question arises, why this form of the Lord is called ‘Panduranga’ which means white.]

(29) मथुरास्थितं ‘mathurāsthitaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is established in Mathura. [Mathura is a holy place like Ayodhya where Lord Krishna, the incarnation of Vishnu in the Dwapar Yug (era) that followed that of Lord Ram in the Treta Yug, did his worldly deeds. This holy name shows that both Lord Krishna and Lord Ram are the same, only they were born in different eras. ‘Mathura’ = a city associated with Lord Krishna; ‘Sthitham’ = to be established in.]

(30) रजकान्तकं ‘rajakāntakaṁ’—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) is the slayer of the haughty Rajak (in his incarnation as Lord Krishna).

[The story of Rajak is related to Lord Krishna, and it appears in Vishnu Puran, Khanda or Ansha no. 5, Canto no. 19, verse nos. 14-17. It says that when Lord Krishna went to Mathura on the invitation of Kansha, its cruel ruler, the Lord met Rajak. The latter was very haughty because of his friendliness with Kansha. By profession he used to colour clothes. When Lord Krishna and his elder brother Balraam asked Rajak for clothes that were coloured blue and yellow, Rajak rebuked them and said many unwarranted things. The Lord became infuriated and hit him hard with his open palms. This resulted in breaking Rajak’s head from his neck, and he died. The Lord then snatched two pieces of cloth, one coloured blue and the other yellow, from him. Baalram wore the blue coloured cloth and Lord Krishna the yellow one. ‘Rajak’ = the name of a person who was very haughty and dear of Kansha, the cruel ruler of Mathura; ‘Antakaam’ = one who brings about an end.]

(b) The Lord (Sri Ram) is as glorious, splendid, brilliant and shining as the brilliant white colour of silver. That is, the Lord possesses all the best of virtues, and is most holy and pure because the colour ‘white’ is a representative colour of these grand and noble qualities. [‘Rajat’ = silver; ‘Kaanta’ = radiance (as white as silver).]

(c) The Lord (Sri Ram) is as splendid and radiant as light; the Lord removes darkness with the light of his presence. The word ‘light’ here also means the illumination provided by knowledge, erudition, wisdom and enlightenment which removes the darkness of ignorance and delusions. [‘Raja’ = light, illumination; ‘Kaantakam’ = one who does or provides something, or brings into effect.]

(31) गजमारकम् । ‘gajamārakam/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had slayed the elephant known as Gaja (in his incarnation as Lord Krishna). [‘Gaja’ = the elephant; ‘Marakam’ = one who killed.]

This story relates to Lord Krishna. This event are narrated in great detail in Bhagvat Maha-puran, as well as in Vishnu Puran, Khand no. 5, Canto 20, verse nos. 22-23, 30-44.

Lord Krishna and his elder brother Balraam had killed a wild and intoxicated elephant known as Kuvalyaapid especially sent by Kansa to kill Krishna and his brother Balraam when the two brothers were coming to attend the ceremony of the bow to be held at the royal pavilion of Kansa, the cruel and tyrannical ruler of Mathura. The Lord had, however, broken this bow earlier (verse nos. 15-17).

This elephant had the strength of Erawat, the royal elephant of Indra, the king of gods. It was standing guard at the gate of the royal pavilion, and it attacked the Lord as he came to the gate. Krishna yanked its left tusk with his right hand, and used it to shatter the head of its tamer, the Mahout. Meanwhile, Balraam broke the elephant’s right tusk and used it as a battering ram to kill other Mahouts standing nearby. Finally, Balraam jumped and kicked the elephant viciously on its head, thereby killing it on the spot.]

(32) सन्नृतं ‘sannutam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is praised, revered, adored, worshipped and honoured by those who are exalted, honourable and high. The Lord possesses the best of virtues and glories. The Lord is most exalted, the best and supreme. [‘Uttam’ = best; ‘Sannutam’ = to have qualities that are the best, to be exalted and high.]

(33) बकमारकं ‘bakamārakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the Bak. [The term ‘Bak’ has two meanings—one is a demon named Bakaasur, and the other is demon in the form of a crane. The word ‘Maarakam’ means the killer of this demon.]

The story associated with this demon is briefly as follows—(a) Bakaasur was a demon who lived near the small town of Ekacakranagar. He used to kill the residents of this town. So they reached an agreement with him that one human being would voluntarily go to him with other eatables, but the demons should not kill at random. When the Pandavas came to live here during their forest exile, they came to know of this curse, and Bhima, the strongest of the Pandava brothers, killed this demon. This rid the town of its menace. This story is narrated in Mahabharata, Aadiparva, 163.

(b) The demon Bak in the form of a crane—this story is mentioned in Bhagvata Maha Puran, Skanda 10, Canto 11, verse nos. 46-51. He was killed by Lord Krishna. It so happened that one day Lord Krishna, his brother Balraam and other companions had gone to a large water body to quench their own thirst as well as of their cows and calves. When they were in the process of drinking water, a great demon named Bakaasur, who lived in the water as a huge crane, immediately lunged forward and gulped down Krishna. When the Lord entered the demon’s mouth, he began to scorch his palate and inner throat as if they were on fire. The demon became terrified and vomited Krishna out, but rushed forward to kill him. Then Lord Krishna caught hold of the demon’s beaks and tore it apart just like one tears a reed into two pieces.]

(34) वृषघातकं ‘vr̥ṣaghātakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the demon named Vrish or Vrish-bhaasur (in his incarnation as Lord Krishna). [‘Vrish’ = a bison; ‘Ghaatakam’ = a killer; the Lord who killed this demon.]

Vrishbhaasur, the bison-shaped demon, was killed by Lord Krishna. This story is mentioned in Vishnu Puran, Khand or Ansha 5, Canto 14, verse nos. 1-14. This demon was in the form of a wild bison who had once come to Vrindavan, causing terror amongst the humble cowherd community. They appealed to Lord Krishna. The Lord challenged him, yelling and clapping loudly to divert the demon's attention towards himself. The bison rushed towards Krishna, pointing his horns at the Lord. Krishna stood like a rock, and caught hold of the demon by the horns and punched him in his abdomen with his bent knee. Then Krishna twisted and turned around the demon's neck as one wrings a piece of wet cloth to squeeze out the water from it. Then, the Lord yanked out a horn and attacked the demon with it. The demon vomited blood and died instantly.]

(35) तुरगार्दनम् 'turagārdanam// 5//'—The Lord (Sri Ram) who had killed the demon named Turga (a donkey). ['Turga' = a demon in the form of a horse or a donkey; 'Danam' = to vanquish; to subdue, to trounce.

Dhenukaasur or Turgaasur—The word 'Dhenu' or 'Turga' mean a donkey or a horse. Hence, this demon (Asur) was in the form of wild donkey or a horse. Lord Krishna had killed him. This story is narrated in Bhagvat Maha Puran, Skandha 10, Canto 15, verse nos. 20-40, and Vishnu Puran, Khanda or Ansha 5, Canto 8, verse nos. 1-13. Briefly it says that there was a forest of rich coconut trees. A demon in the form of a donkey or a horse lived in it. He used to destroy the fruits and create unnecessary havoc in this forest. Once, Lord Krishna and his elder brother Balraam came there. The two brothers wished to eat the ripe fruits of the coconut trees, and so Balraam fell some of them. The demon heard the sound and charged at them. He kicked Balraam with his two hind legs on his chest. Balraam caught hold of the demon with these legs and swung him around. Then he dashed him on a sturdy coconut tree, thereby killing him. All other companions of this demon who came to help him met the same fate.] || ५ ||

नन्दजं वसुदेवजं बलियज्ञगं सुरपालकम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ ६ ॥

nandajam vasudevajam baliyajñagam surapālakam/
tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nararūpiṇam raghunandanam// 6//

Line no. 6—

(36) नन्दजं 'nandajam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) who became the son of Nanda. [This refers to Lord Vishnu's incarnation as Lord Krishna. Addressing Lord Ram as Lord Krishna is to establish uniformity between these two incarnations of Lord Vishnu. The story goes that after Lord Krishna was born to Devki inside the cell of a prison of Kansha, the cruel ruler of Mathura, his worldly father, Vasudev, had taken the infant Krishna and gave him to Nanda who was the chief of the cowherd community of Gokul in Vrindavan. His wife was Yashoda who brought up Lord Krishna as her own son. This story is narrated in Bhagvat Maha Puran, Skanda 10, Canto 3, verse nos. 47-54, and in Canto 5, verse no. 23-27, as well as in Vishnu Puran, Khanda or Ansha 5, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-23. 'Nanda' = the name of the chief of the cowherd community of Vrindavan; 'Nandan' = a son.]

(37) वसुदेवजं ‘vasudevajam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who was born as the son of Vasudeo. [This refers to Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as Lord Krishna. Addressing Lord Ram as Lord Krishna is to establish uniformity between these two incarnations of Lord Vishnu. Vasudeo was married to Devaki, the sister of Kansha who was the tyrannical ruler of Mathura. Vasudeo and Devaki had prayed to Lord Vishnu in an earlier life that they want to have the Lord as their son. So Lord Vishnu incarnated as Lord Krishna to become the son of the couple. But as it happened, Kansha was cursed that the eighth son of Devaki would be his killer, so he threw them in jail and started killing all the children born to the couple. It was in this prison cell that Krishna revealed himself to the couple. ‘Vasudeo’ was the son of king Shur of Mathura, and he was married to Devaki, the sister of Kansha who was the son of Ugrasen of the Bhoj dynasty. This story is narrated in Bhagvat Maha Puran, Skanda 10, Canto 1 to 3; and in Vishnu Puran, Khanda or Ansha 5, Cantos 1 to 3.]

(38) बलियज्ञं ‘baliyajñam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who had gone to attend the fire sacrifice of king Bali. [This refers to Lord Vaaman who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu as a dwarf mendicant. He had gone to attend the fire sacrifice held by Bali, and had measured the entire creation in his two steps, while the third was placed on Bali’s head, thereby subduing him. This name again establishes that all the incarnations of Lord Vishnu have the same importance and significance. ‘Bali’ = a great king who was renowned for his charities; ‘Yagya’ = fire sacrifice; ‘Gam’ = to go.

The legend of this incarnation is briefly as follows— This is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. When Bali, the grandson of Prahalad for whom Vishnu had incarnated as Nrsingh, conquered the entire world and deprived Indra, the king of Gods who ruled over the heavens, Vishnu had taken the dwarfish form of a Brahmin mendicant to retrieve the heaven for Indra when he was requested by Aditi, the mother of Gods, to do so. He approached Bali, who was famous for his charities, as a ‘Vaaman’ or a dwarf, and begged him for ground sufficient enough to be covered by his three small steps. When the unsuspecting Bali agreed, Vaaman measured the entire earth with one step, the heaven with the second step, and for the third step he measured Bali’s own head symbolizing the crown of the kingdom of Bali. He put his third step on Bali’s head and pushed the latter to the nether world. Hence, Vishnu is also called ‘Trivikram’—one who conquered the three worlds in three steps. But the Lord is so kind and gracious that he saw the injustice done to a magnanimous Bali who had been righteous and firm in his vow of making charity, and never rescinded on his commitments. So, the Lord made him the king of the nether world, and himself took up the job of protecting him there as his gatekeeper. This incarnation of Lord Vishnu is his fifth and followed the Nrsingh form which was the fourth. The idea behind this Vaaman incarnation is that even the most humble looking man, represented by the diminutive Vaaman in this story, can indeed have the stupendous power of the Spirit that even the most powerful gods and kings lack.]

(39) सुरपालकम् । ‘surapālakam/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the sustainer, protector and well-wisher of the Gods. [‘Sur’ = gods; ‘Palakam’ = one who sustains and protects.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- ‘tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nararūpiṇam raghunandanam// 6//’—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the

world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 4.] ॥ ६ ॥

केशवं कपिवेष्टितं कपिमारकं मृगमर्दिनम् । सुन्दरं द्विजपालकं दितिजार्दनं दनुजार्दनम् ॥ ७ ॥

keśavaṁ kapiveṣṭitaṁ kapimāraṁ mṛgamardinam/
sundaraṁ dvijapālakaṁ ditijārdanaṁ danujārdanam// 7 //

Line no. 7—

(40) केशवं ‘keśavaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is also known as Keshav. [This name is used for Lord Vishnu as well as for Lord Krishna. The use of this name for Lord Ram implies that there is no difference between the two forms of Lord Vishnu as Ram and Krishna. The Tripadvibhūta Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 7, paragraph no. 18 says that Keshav, or Lord Vishnu, has twenty-four Vyuhas or forms. These 24 forms are the different incarnations, called the ‘Avtaars’, of Lord Vishnu. There are said to be ten chief ones and fourteen minor ones. The ten main ones = Matsya (Fish), Kurma (Tortoise), Varaha (Boar), Nrsingh (half man and half lion), Vaaman (Dwarf), Balraam, Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Kalki. The fourteen minor ones = such as sage Sankaadi, Kapil, Narad, Veda Vyas, Dattatreya, Nar-Narayan, Rishavdeo, King Prithu, Dhanvantri, Mohini, Hayagriva, Hans, Yagya or fire sacrifice, and Hari who blessed the child devotee Dhruv = total 24 Avtaars.]

(41) कपिवेष्टितं ‘kapiveṣṭitaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) was surrounded by the monkeys. [The monkey army had surrounded the Lord from all sides throughout the Lanka campaign. ‘Kapi’ = monkeys; ‘Aveshtita’ = to surround, to cover.]

(42) कपिमारकं ‘kapimāraṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who had killed the monkey (named Vaali, the elder brother of Sugriv). [Vaali was the elder brother of Sugriv and the king of the monkey race. He had thrashed his younger brother Sugriv due to some misunderstanding and threw him out of the kingdom, thereby usurping his share and right to the throne of Kishkindha, the capital of the kingdom of monkeys. Not only this, Vaali had also kept Sugriv’s lawful wife as his mistress, a deed which is totally unethical. Lord Ram had slayed Vaali when Sugriv complained of the injustice that was done to him by his own brother.]

(43) मृगमर्दिनम् । ‘mṛgamardinam/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the deer. [This relates to the slaying of the demon Marich who was forced by the demon king Ravana to become a decoy golden deer so that he could steal Sita from the forest hermitage of Lord Ram. Ravana was instigated by his sister Supernakha who was earlier deformed by Lord Ram by getting her nose and ears cut when she tried to lure the Lord with her lascivious gestures. This stealing of Sita set the stage for the grand war of Lanka when the whole of the evil demon race was annihilated by Lord Ram so that Sita could be rescued from Ravana’s clutches. ‘Mṛig’ = deer; ‘Mardinam’ = one who killed.]

(44) सुन्दरं ‘sundaram’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is beautiful and enchanting in every respect. [‘Sundar’ = beautiful. The word does not only mean physical beauty but also beauty of the eclectic virtues, noble character and superior knowledge that the Lord exemplified. Everything about the Lord was beautiful and magnificent and most charming.]

(45) द्विजपालकं ‘dvijapālakaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a sustainer, protector, caretaker and well-wisher of the Brahmins (the learned and the upper class in the society). [‘Dwij’ = a Brhahmin; ‘Paalakam’ = one who takes care of someone else.]

(46) दितिजार्दनं ‘ditijārdanaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the killer and eliminator, or the crusher and vanquisher of the demons and other evil creatures who are the sons of Diti. [‘Diti’ = the mother of demons; ‘Jaardanam’ = the one who kills, vanquishes, crushes or subdues the sons of Diti, i.e. the demons.]

(47) दनुजार्दनम् ‘danujārdanam// 7 //’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the killer of demons. [‘Danuj’ = demons; ‘Jaardanam’ = the one who kills, vanquishes, crushes or subdues them.] ॥ ७ ॥

बालकं खरमर्दिनं ऋषिपूजितं मुनिचिन्तितम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ ८ ॥

bālakaṁ kharamardinaṁ ṛṣipūjitaṁ municintitaṁ/
tvām bhaje jagadīśvaraṁ nararūpiṇaṁ raghunandanam// 8//

Line no. 8—

(48) बालकं ‘bālakaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had taken the form of a child when he revealed himself as a human being. The word also means that the Lord is as innocent, untainted, unprejudiced and pure-hearted as a young child who knows no corruptions associated with this gross mundane world, is extremely easy to please and as easy to befriend. [This refers to the birth of Lord Vishnu as Ram in the household of king Dasrath and queen Kaushalya of Ayodhya. ‘Baalak’ = a child.]

The fact that a child is like the Lord himself is affirmed in the Holy Bible also. Refer: Gospel of St. Matthew, 18/1-6—1: At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? 2: And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3: And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. 4: Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5: And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. 6: But whose shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Gospel of St. Mark, 9/36-37—36: And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, 37: Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.]

(49) खरमर्दिनं ‘kharamardinam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had killed the demon named Khar. [‘Khar’ = a demon by this name; ‘Mardinam’ = a slayer or killer of.]

(50) ऋषिपूजितं ‘rṣipūjitam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had been worshipped, adored and honoured by the Rishis. [‘Rishi’ = sages and seers; ‘Poojitam’ = worshipped by.]

(51) मुनिचिन्तितम् । ‘municintitam/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) was the subject of regular contemplation, meditation and remembrance by the Munis. [‘Muni’ = sages and hermits; ‘Chintitam’ = constantly remembered by.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- ‘tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nararūpiṇam’—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 6.] ॥ ८ ॥

शंकरं जलशायिनं कुशबालकं रथवाहनम् । सरयूनतं प्रियपुष्पकं प्रियभूसुरं लवबालकम् ॥ ९ ॥

śaṅkaram jalaśāyinaṁ kuśabālakam rathavāhanam/
sarayūnatam priyapuṣpakam priyabhūsuram lavabālakam// 9//

Line no. 9—

(52) शंकरं ‘śaṅkaram’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is also known as ‘Shankar’—one who is truthful, beautiful, wise, enlightened, auspicious, holy and divine. [‘Shankar’ is a term usually used to mean Lord Shiva, but it is also an epithet as well as an honour for those who possess these virtues, attributes and characters. Therefore, it is both a proper noun as well as an adjective.]

(53) जलशायिनं ‘jalaśāyinaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) sleeps on the water. [This refers to Lord Vishnu’s cosmic form that is depicted in the Purans, the ancient texts, as lying reclining on a bed made of the coiled body of the celestial serpent known as Seshnath who floats on the surface of Kshirsagar, the celestial ocean of milk. ‘Jal’ = water; ‘Shaa-yinam’ = one who sleeps on.]

(54) कुशबालकं ‘kuśabālakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had a son named Kush. [Kush was the elder son of Lord Ram, and he was born to Sita, the Lord’s divine consort, in the hermitage of sage Valmiki. His younger brother was named Lav. ‘Kush’ = name of Ram’s son; ‘Baalakam’ = a child.]

(55) रथवाहनम् । ‘rathavāhanam/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) who rides on a chariot. [‘Rath’ = a chariot; ‘Vaahan’ = a vehicle.]

(56) सरयूनतं ‘sarayūnatam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is shown respect by the holy river Saryu who bows before him. [‘Saryu’ = the name of a river that flows north of Ayodhya; ‘Natam’ = to bow before.]

(57) प्रियपुष्पकं ‘priyapuṣpakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is dear to Pushpak (the celestial vehicle of Kuber, the treasurer of the Gods). [The story goes that the demon Ravana had defeated Kuber and captured the treasury of the Gods. He had kept this plane, named Pushpak, in his captivity. When Lord Ram won the war and killed Ravana, it was this plane that the Lord used to come back to Ayodhya. Then the Lord allowed Pushpak to go back to the heaven, thereby freeing it from its bondage. It ought to be remembered here that in ancient Hindu mythology, even such inanimate objects as the air-plane known as Pushpak are depicted in a personified form. The reason is that anything that lives in the heaven is supposed to be divine and holy, and therefore immortal as compared to the mortal creatures of this world on earth.]

Since the Lord had provided the Pushpak its freedom, he became dear to the latter. [‘Priya’ = dear; ‘Pushpakam’ = the air-plane of Kuber that was held captive by Ravana.]

(58) प्रियभूसुरं ‘priyabhūsuram’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is dear to the ‘Bhusurs’, the gods or the lords of the earth. [This term ‘Bhusur’ refers to the Brahmin class which is regarded as exalted and learned in the human race, and therefore shown respect in the society. They are honoured as being equivalent to the Gods in the heaven. ‘Priya’ = dear; ‘Bhu’ = earth; ‘Sur’ = the gods.]

(59) लवबालकम् ‘lavabālakam// 9//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had a child (son) named Lava. [Lava was the younger brother of Kush. ‘Lava’ = the name of the second son of Ram; ‘Baalakam’ = a child.]

The word may also mean that the Lord loves children as they are innocent and pure-hearted, and he treats all children like they were his own son named ‘Lava’.] ॥

९ ॥

श्रीधरं मधुसूदनं भरताग्रजं गरुडध्वजम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ १० ॥

śrīdharam madhusūdanam bharatāgrajam garuḍadhvajam/
tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nararūpiṇam raghunandanam// 10//

Line no. 10—

(59) श्रीधरं ‘śrīdharam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) literally bears or holds Sri (Laxmi, the patron goddess of prosperity and well-being, and the divine consort of Vishnu) on his chest or bosom. That is, Sri or goddess Laxmi is very dear to the cosmic Lord known as Vishnu. [‘Sri’ = Laxmi; ‘Dharam’ = to place, to establish, to put. Refer also to serial no. 79.]

(60) मधुसूदनं ‘madhusūdanam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the killer of the demon Madhu. [This refers to Lord Vishnu killing the demon named Madhu along with another demon named Kaitav. Therefore the Lord is known as Maadhav as well as Madhusudan. See line no. 1, name no. 5. ‘Madhu’ = the name of a demon; ‘Sudanam’ = the killer or slayer.]

(61) भरताग्रजं ‘bharatāgrajam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the elder brother of Bharat. [Lord Ram were four brothers—Ram, Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan. Ram was the eldest, followed by Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan who was the youngest. ‘Bharat’ = the younger brother of Ram; ‘Agraj’ = elder brother.]

(62) गरुडध्वजम् । ‘garuḍadhvajam/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has Garud sitting on his flag or royal standard; the royal flag of the Lord has the insignia of Garud marked on it. [This clearly refers to Lord Vishnu whose mount is Garud, the celestial Eagle. Lord Vishnu’s flag has the form—a sign— of Garud embroidered on it, much like a sign that the flags of kings and emperors have that are exclusive to them and help to identify them. Garud is also shown as sitting on the Lord’s flag. Garud is also the vehicle of Lord Vishnu, and is regarded as swift as the mind in its movement—i.e. it can go anywhere at will in the shortest time possible. ‘Garud’ = the mount of Vishnu; ‘Dhwaj’ = flag.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- ‘tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nara rūpiṇam raghunandanam // 10//’—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 8.] ॥ १० ॥

गोप्रियं गुरुपुत्रदं वदतां वरं करुणानिधिम् । भक्तपं जनतोषदं सुरपूजितं श्रुतिभिः स्तुतम् ॥ ११ ॥

gopriyam guruputradam vadatām varam karuṇānidhim/
bhaktapam janatoṣadam surapūjitam śrutibhiḥ stutam// 11//

Line no. 11—

(63) गोप्रियं ‘gopriyam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) was dear to the cows, or he loved the cows (in his incarnation as Lord Krishna). [Once again, as often in this hymn, Lord Ram and Lord Krishna are treated as one, because these two incarnations were the only two main forms that Lord Vishnu had taken as a human. ‘Go’ = cow in Sanskrit or Hindi; ‘Priyam’ = to be dear of.]

(64) गुरुपुत्रदं ‘guruputradam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) had given his Guru (teacher) his son back. [This again relates to Lord Vishnu’s incarnation as Lord Krishna. The Lord was taught by Saandipani. When the education was complete, the Lord asked his Guru to ask for anything as a gift in return for giving his knowledge. The teacher was learned, and he did not want anything in return, but his wife requested Krishna that if he is really interested in giving some sort of gift then he should bring their dead son back to them. So Krishna went to the nether world but could not find their son. Then

he went to the heaven and found him in the custody of Yam, the god of death. Krishna then brought the son and gave him to his teacher Saandipani. This incident is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat Puran, Skandha 10, Purvaardha, Canto 45, verse nos. 31-48. ‘Guru’ = a teacher; ‘Putra’ = a son; ‘Dam’ = to give.]

(65) वदतां वरं ‘*vadatām varam*’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the greatest giver of boons, and the best speaker and an expert orator in this world. [‘Vadataam’ = a speaker; ‘Varam’ = the senior most; a boon.]

(66) करुणानिधिम् । ‘*karuṇānidhim*’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a treasury of mercy, compassion, benevolence and grace. [‘Karuna’= mercy, compassion; ‘Nidhi’ = a treasury, a source of something great.]

(67) भक्तपं ‘*bhaktapam*’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a protector of devotees. [‘Bhakta’ = devotee; ‘Tapam’ = miseries and torments.]

(68) जनतोषदं ‘*janatoṣadam*’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the one who gives or grants contentedness and satisfaction to his subjects and dependants. [‘Jana’ = subjects, dependants; ‘Tosh’ = satisfaction, contentedness; ‘Danam’ = to give, grant.]

(69) सुरपूजितं ‘*surapūjitam*’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is worshipped, adored, honoured and respected by the Gods. [‘Sur’= gods; ‘Pujitam’ = is worshipped by.]

(70) श्रुतिभिः स्तुतम् ‘*śrutibhiḥ stutam*// 11//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is lauded and honoured by the Vedas (the ancient scriptures. [‘Sruti’ = the Vedas; ‘Stutam’ = to honour and adore; to give great respect and offer prayers to someone.] || ११ ||

भुक्तिदं जनमुक्तिदं जनरञ्जनं नृपनन्दनम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ १२ ॥

*bhuktidaṁ janamuktidaṁ janarañjanam nṛpanandanam/
tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nararūpiṇam raghunandanam// 12//*

Line no. 12—

(71) भुक्तिदं ‘*bhuktidaṁ*’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a giver of all comforts and sufferings (according to the creature’s deeds). [Being the Supreme Lord of creation, it is he who decides the degree and extent of reward in the way of pleasures and comfort that a creature is eligible to get by the virtue of the good deeds done by it, or a punishment by the way of sufferings and pains for the evil deeds. ‘Bhukti’ = to suffer or enjoy; ‘Dam’ = a giver.]

(72) जनमुक्तिदं ‘*janamuktidaṁ*’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a giver of Mukti (liberation and deliverance to the soul of the living being) to the living being who is the subject of the kingdom of the Lord. [Being the Supreme Lord of creation, he grants emancipation and salvation to the creature; it is the Lord who can provide the creature

with freedom from the horrors of this world and its endless cycle of birth and death along with their attendant problems and torments. ‘Jana’ = subjects, followers, dependants; ‘Mukti’ = liberation and deliverance; ‘Dam’ = giver.]

(73) जनरञ्जनं ‘janarañjanam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a giver of happiness and joy to his subjects and followers. [‘Jana’ = subjects, followers, dependants; ‘Ranjan’ = happiness and joy.]

(74) नृपनन्दनम् । ‘nrpanandanam/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) became a son of the king (Dasrath of Ayodhya). [In his previous life, Dasrath was a king named Manu. He is regarded as the first male amongst the human race. He and his wife Satrupa had prayed to Lord Vishnu that they want the Lord as their son. It was this boon that resulted in Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being, to become a son of Dasrath. In this incarnation, Vishnu was known as ‘Ram’. ‘Nrip’ = king; ‘Nandanam’ = a son.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- ‘tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nara rūpiṇam raghunandanam// 12//’—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 10.] ॥ १२ ॥

चिद्धनं चिरजीविनं मणिमालिनं वरदोन्मुखम् । श्रीधरं धृतिदायकं बलवर्धनं गतिदायकम् ॥ १३ ॥

ciddhanam cirajīvinam maṇimālinam varadonmukham/
śrīdharam dhṛtidāyakam balavardhanam gatidāyakam// 13//

Line no. 13—

(75) चिद्धनं ‘ciddhanam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a fountain or spring (the place of origin) of pure cosmic Consciousness, and its personified form. [‘Chidda’ = consciousness; ‘Dhanam’ = a treasury, fount, source, dense.]

(76) चिरजीविनं ‘cirajīvinam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has an eternal life; the Lord has an infinitely long life; He is long-living and imperishable. [‘Chir’ = long-lasting, infinite, eternal, imperishable, always; ‘Jivanam’ = life.]

(77) मणिमालिनं ‘maṇimālinam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) wears a garland or a necklace of priceless gems. [‘Mani’ = gem; ‘Maala’ = garland or necklace.]

(78) वरदोन्मुखम् । ‘varadonmukham/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is ever eager and ready to grant auspicious boons and gifts (to his followers and devotees who are righteous, pious and holy). [‘Var’ = boons and grants; ‘Unmukham’ = ready, eager, inclined to do or give.]

(79) श्रीधरं ‘śrīdharam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) bears the sign of the Srivatsa on his chest. [This is the mark of the foot of sage Bhrigu which he had caste on the chest of

Vishnu ones when he got annoyed upon the Lord. The Lord is so enamoured of his devotees that instead of taking umbrage at this disrespect shown by the sage and punishing him for his misdemeanor, he had blessed the sage that his footprint would always remain on his chest as one of the jewels worn by Lord Vishnu. However, Laxmi was so angry at the temerity of sage Brighu that she cursed that henceforth she, in the form of wealth and material abundance, would always shun a Brahmin; it is believed that this is the reason why Brahmins, who are otherwise of a high birth, are always serving others in the society who are junior to them by birth for their monetary needs. Refer Atharva Veda's Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse nos. 30 and 35. 'Sri' = the sign of the Srivatsa; 'Dharam' = to bear. Refer also to serial no. 59 herein above.]

(80) धृतिदायकं 'dhr̥tidāyakam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a giver of Dhriti, also known as 'Dhairya'—i.e. the virtues of patience, courage, fortitude and forbearance. [That is, the Lord empowers the person who is devoted to the Lord and seeks the Lord's support to develop the grand virtues of patience and courage as well as fortitude and forbearance which helps him to overcome all the problems of life with calmness and poise. Such a man is never disturbed or agitated mentally and emotionally, and he is able to maintain his balance and composure. 'Dhrit' = courage, patience, fortitude and forbearance; 'Daayakam' = giver or bestower of something.]

(81) बलवर्धनं 'balavardhanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) enhances strength and valour (of his devotees and followers, as well as those who are righteous and holy). The Lord encourages those who are good and righteous by enhancing their strength to cope with adversities and evil. ['Bal' = force, strength; 'Vardhanam' = to increase.]

(82) गतिदायकम् ॥ 'gatidāyakam// 13//'—The Lord (Sri Ram) gives the creature his ultimate destination in the form of rest for his soul and its emancipation and salvation. This is called 'Gati' or final destination. It also means that the Lord provides the world (i.e. its creature and the elements) the power of movement and the ability to keep the momentum. ['Gati' = the ultimate destination; speed and swiftness of movement; 'Daayakam' = giver.] ॥ १३ ॥

शान्तिदं जनतारकं शरधारिणं गजगामिनम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ १४ ॥

śāntidaṁ janatāraṁ śaradhāriṇaṁ gajagāminam/
tvāṁ bhaje jagadīśvaraṁ nararūpiṇaṁ raghunandanam// 14//

Line no. 14—

(83) शान्तिदं 'śāntidaṁ'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a giver of peace, tranquility and solace to the creature and his soul. ['Shanti' = peace; 'Dam' = giver.]

(84) जनतारकं 'janatāraṁ'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the one who takes the subjects of his kingdom (living beings, followers, devotees and dependants) across the formidable barrier represented by this world of transmigration, a world of delusions

and endless cycle of birth and death along with its attendant miseries and torments. The Lord helps his subjects to overcome all spiritual hurdles and takes them to cross the vast ocean represented by the countless problems and horrors of this world. ['Jana' = subjects, dependants, followers; 'Tarakam' = one who takes across a formidable barrier.]

(85) शरधारिणं 'śaradhāriṇam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) holds an arrow (in his hands). ['Shar' = arrow; 'Dhaarinam' = to hold.]

(86) गजगामिनम् । 'gajagāminam/'—The Lord (Sri Ram) had rushed forward or gone swiftly to save the elephant known as the Gaj. [This relates to an incident when Lord Vishnu had gone to save an elephant who was being pulled in the water by a crocodile. The elephant had tried all his might to save himself, but failed. When he was just about to completely drown in the water, he broke a lotus from the surrounding water and offered the flower as his last offering to the Lord. The Lord then rushed to save his devotee, the elephant. The Lord not only pulled him out of the water but cut off the head of the crocodile with his Chakra, the circular saw-like invincible weapon of Lord Vishnu. 'Gaja' = an elephant; 'Gaaminum' = to go.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- 'tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nara rūpiṇam raghunandanam// 14//'—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 12.] ॥ १४॥

शार्ङ्गिणं कमलाननं कमलादृशं पदपङ्कजम् । श्यामलं रविभासुरं शशिसौख्यदं करुणार्णवम् ॥ १५॥

śārṅgiṇam kamalānanam kamalādr̥śam padapaṅkajam/
śyāmalaṁ ravibhāsuram śāśisaukhyadam karuṇārṇavam// 15//

Line no. 15—

(87) शार्ङ्गिणं 'śārṅgiṇam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) holds a bow known as Shaarang. [This is the bow held by Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Lord of creation. It symbolizes the cosmic senses of the Viraat Purush. This bow of Lord Vishnu is also known as the *Shaankhya Dhanush* (bow). It was made from the bones of demon named Shaankhya-chuda after he was killed by Lord Shiva. According to Krishna Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 23, the Shaarang bow of Lord Vishnu stands for the Vaishnavi Maya which is the primary form of Maya closely associated with Vishnu. The Atharva Veda's Gopal Uttar Tapini Upanishad, verse no. 38 says that this Shaarang bow represents the Maya of the Supreme Being.]

(88) कमलाननं 'kamalānanam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) has eyes like the lotus flower. ['Kamal' = lotus; 'Nanam' = eyes.]

(89) कमलादृशं 'kamalādr̥śam'—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) looks as beautiful and untainted as the lotus flower. (b) The Lord (Ram as Vishnu) keeps his sight on

Kamalaa, goddess Laxmi, his divine consort. [‘Kamal’ = lotus; ‘Kamalaa’ = goddess Laxmi, the divine consort of Vishnu; ‘Drisham’ = seen, observed.]

(90) पदपङ्कजम् । ‘padapaṅkajam/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has lotus-like feet. [‘Pad’ = feet; ‘Pankaj’ = lotus.]

(91) श्यामलं ‘śyāmalaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has a dark complexion. [‘Shyaamal’ = dark complexion.]

(92) रविभासुरं ‘ravibhāsuram’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is as splendid, radiant and glorious as the brilliant Sun. [‘Ravi’ = sun; ‘Bhaasuram’ = splendour and brilliance.]

(93) शशिसौख्यदं ‘śaśisaukhyadaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is like the Moon that is soothing, provides comfort and peace, as well as happiness and joy to the beholder. [‘Shashi’ = moon; ‘Saukhyā’ = happiness and joy; ‘Dam’ = gives.]

(94) करुणार्णवम् ‘karuṇārṇavam// 15//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is an ocean of and a personified form of the glorious virtues of mercy, compassion and kindness. [‘Karuna’ = mercy; ‘Varnam’ = a glorious form of.] ॥ १५ ॥

सत्पतिं नृपपालकं नृपवन्दितं नृपतिप्रियम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ १६ ॥

satpatim nṛpapālakam nṛpavanditam nṛpatipriyam/
tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nararūpiṇam raghunandanam// 16//

Line no. 16—

(95) सत्पतिं ‘satpatim’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is truly the supreme Lord of creation. He is the patron Lord of the grand virtue of Truth. [‘Sat’ = true, truth; ‘Patim’ = lord.]

(96) नृपपालकं ‘nṛpapālakam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the sustainer, care-taker, protector and well-wisher of all the Kings of this world; the Lord is the Authority who sustains, protects and provides for all the Kings in this world. [‘Nrip’ = king; ‘Paalakam’ = protector, care-taker and sustainer.]

(97) नृपवन्दितं ‘nṛpavanditam’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is adored, honoured and praised by all the Kings. [‘Nrip’ = king; ‘Vanditam’ = praised and honoured by.]

(98) नृपतिप्रियम् । ‘nṛpatipriyam/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is dear to all the Kings in this world; the Lord is the King of the world who is loved and adored by all others. [‘Nrip’ = king; ‘Priyam’ = dear.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- ‘tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nararūpiṇam raghunandanam// 16//’—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of

the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 14.] ॥ १६ ॥

निर्गुणं सगुणात्मकं नृपमण्डनं मतिवर्धनम् । अच्युतं पुरुषोत्तमं परमेष्ठिनं स्मितभाषिणम् ॥ १७ ॥

nirguṇaṁ saguṇātmakaṁ nṛpamaṇḍanaṁ mativardhanaṁ/
acyutaṁ puruṣottamaṁ parameṣṭhinaṁ smitabhāṣiṇam// 17//

Line no. 17—

(99) निर्गुणं ‘nirguṇaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is without any attributes and definable qualities that may be limiting in their reach. [This is the cosmic and all-pervading form of the Supreme Being. This form is infinite, indescribable, beyond the reach of the mind and the intellect, all-encompassing and universal. It takes the form of each single individual element and thing in this world because the entire creation is a revelation of the same Supreme Being. Nothing in existence is not one or the other form of this Supreme Being. therefore, no single word or quality or epithet or attribute would do justice to who the Lord actually is or the form in which he exists because each one of them has its own limitation but the Lord is limitless and infinite in meaning and form. The Lord, for instance, is like the sky or the air or the water which have no definitive shape of their own but take the shape of the container in which they are present. The water in a cup, a piece of ice and the ocean is the same element known as ‘water’ though there is a vast difference between them. ‘Nirguna’ = without any Gunas or qualities.]

(100) सगुणात्मकं ‘saguṇātmakaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is also with attributes and known qualities. [This relates to the known world that is visible. All things and creatures have a certain form, whether that form is miniscule like the atom or the single-celled creature such as the bacteria or amoeba, or like the colossus mountain, the tall trees or huge animals that roam the surface of earth, or even as the human being of myriad cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, language, beliefs etc. All of them are one or the other form of the same Supreme Lord. So the Lord has a given set of attributes and qualities in any given form in which the units of this creation exist. Therefore we say that the Lord has attributes. Even when the Supreme Lord himself took a birth as an incarnation, say for instance Lord Ram in our case, he had certain physical characteristics and personality traits. That is, he had some specific attributes and qualities that were specific to this form of Ram. Hence, the Supreme Being is ‘Saguna’ also. This is the great paradox of the Lord which makes him indefinable and beyond comprehension of the limited reach of the mind and the intellect—that he is ‘Nirguna’ as well as ‘Saguna’. The word ‘Saguna’ means to have certain qualities and attributes.]

(101) नृपमण्डनं ‘nṛpamaṇḍanaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is like the crown jewel and an ornament amongst the legend of kings and emperors who ever ruled this world. He is the greatest of kings and emperors of this world. [That is, he has all the best qualities and character traits that one expects from a king or an emperor—such as for instance his nature of being merciful, compassionate, forgiving, graceful, law-abiding,

caring, loving, benevolent, magnanimous, charitable, judicious and farsighted, as well as strong, valiant, powerful, dignified, honourable and taintless. ‘Nrip’ = king; ‘Mandanam’ = ornamental decoration.]

(102) मतिवर्धनम् । ‘mativardhanam/’—The Lord (Sri Ram) enhances one’s intellectual and mental refinement, prowess and abilities. The Lord blesses his devotees and followers with wisdom and intelligence. [Just like a student of a learned and expert teacher benefits from the teacher’s knowledge if the latter is kind to diligently teach his ward, the Lord also tries his best and ensures that those who rely upon him get the best of intellectual fruits that are available in this world. ‘Mati’ = mind; ‘Vardhan’ = to increase.]

(103) अच्युतं ‘acyutaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is steady, and he never can fall from his exalted and high stature. He is ever graceful, dignified, immaculate and beyond reproach. [‘Achut’ = that which does not fall.]

(104) पुरुषोत्तमं ‘puruṣottamaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the best, an excellent and the most exalted Male (‘Purush’) ever born on earth; the Lord is the Supreme Being himself in a personified form as an exalted and the most ideal and virtuous male member of the human race. [The term ‘Purush’ has a double meaning here—it means that in his incarnation as a human known as Lord Ram, the Supreme Being is the best amongst all the males ever born on earth, and as the cosmic Supreme Being he is the best amongst all the Gods of the heavens. ‘Purush’ = male; ‘Uttam’ = the best, excellent.]

(105) परमेष्ठिनं ‘parameṣṭhinaṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the almighty, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient Supreme Being known as Parmesthi. [‘Parmesthi’ = the Supreme Being who is almighty, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient.]

(106) स्मितभाषिणम् ‘smitabhāṣiṇam// 17//’—The Lord (Sri Ram) has a smiling face that is sweet and endearing. The Lord talks or speaks sweetly and in a pleasant voice that is friendly, welcoming and amiable. Whenever the Lord talks he always has a sweet smile on his lips. [‘Smit’ = smile that is sweet and pleasant; ‘Bhaashinam’ = to talk or speak.] ॥ १७ ॥

ईश्वरं हनुमन्नुतं कमलाधिपं जनसाक्षिणम् । त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम् ॥ १८ ॥

īśvaraṁ hanumannutaṁ kamalādhīpaṁ janasākṣiṇam/
tvāṁ bhaje jagadīśvaraṁ nara rūpiṇaṁ raghunandanam// 18//

Line no. 18—

(107) ईश्वरं ‘īśvaraṁ’—The Lord (Sri Ram) is indeed and without gainsay the Supreme Being and the Lord of the entire creation (‘Ishwar’).

(108) हनुमन्नुतं 'hanumannutam'—(a) The Lord (Sri Ram) makes Hanuman happy and elated. The Lord enhances the confidence and glory of Hanuman. (b) The Lord is praised, honoured and adored by Hanuman who bows reverentially before him. [Hanuman was the closest monkey devotee of the Lord. He was instrumental in finding Sita for Lord Ram, and in winning the war at Lanka. 'Hanuman' = the monkey friend and devotee of Lord Ram; 'Unnat' = to rise or increase; 'Nuttam' = to bow and adore someone.]

(109) कमलाधिपं 'kamalādhīpam'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is the Lord (husband) of Kamlaa, the goddess Laxmi who is Lord Vishnu's divine consort and the patron goddess of prosperity and wealth. ['Kamlaa' = Laxmi, so-called because she holds a lotus in her hands; 'Dhipam' = lord, king, husband.]

(110) जनसाक्षिणम् । 'janasākṣiṇam/'—The Lord (Sri Ram) is a neutral and universal witness for all the living beings of this creation, and for what they do and think. [Being the cosmic Soul of this creation, the Lord resides in the heart of all living beings, and therefore nothing is hidden from him or unknown to him. The Lord is omniscient and all-knowing, therefore he witnesses whatever a creature does externally and overtly, as well as what he thinks and feels inside his mind and heart internally. 'Jana' = subjects of the kingdom, the ordinary creature; 'Saakshi' = witness.]

त्वां भजे जगदीश्वरं नररूपिणं रघुनन्दनम्-- 'tvām bhaje jagadīśvaram nara rūpiṇam raghunandanam// 18//'—I worship you, oh Lord (Sri Ram), who are the Lord of the world, is in the form of a human being, and are born in the race of kings belonging to the Raghu dynasty. [Refer line no. 16.] ॥ १८ ॥

[Note—The above stanzas, from no. 1 till no. 18, of this great devotional hymn dedicated to Lord Ram outline the Lord's one hundred and ten names. Now, Lord Shiva tells Parvati the time when to say this hymn, and the spiritual and other rewards that augment to the devotee who uses this hymn to worship the Lord.]

ईश्वरोदितमेतदुत्तममादराच्छतनामकम् । यः पठेद् भुवि मानवस्तव भक्तिमांस्तपनोदये ॥ १९ ॥

īśvaroditametaduttamamādarācchatanāmakam/
yaḥ paṭhed bhuvi mānavastava bhaktimānstapanodaye// 19//

Line no. 19—

Lord Shiva said—'Anyone on the surface of this earth who offers his worship to Lord Ram, the Supreme Being, by faithfully and devotionally reciting this hymn consisting of more than a hundred glorious and divine Names of the Lord every morning at the time of sunrise, will develop great faith, devotion and love for the Lord (Sri Ram).

त्वत्पदं निजबन्धुदारसुतैर्युतश्चिरमेत्य नः । सोऽस्तु ते पदसेवने बहुतत्परो मम वाक्यतः ॥ २० ॥

(आनन्दरामायण, पूर्णकाण्ड ६।३२-५१)

tvatpadaṁ nijabandhudārasutairyutaścirametya naḥ/
sostu te padasevane bahutatparo mama vākyataḥ// 20//

(ānandarāmāyaṇa, pūrṇakāṇḍa 6.32-51)

Line no. 20—

Such a person would come to my (Lord Shiva's) divine abode along with his kith and kin, his wife and sons etc., and would steadily serve the holy feet of the Lord (Sri Ram as the Supreme Being) for an infinitely long time to come.'

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(2.3) Importance/significance of the figure '108'

Importance of the figure of 108: The number '108' is regarded as very auspicious because the total of its first digit '1' and the last digit '8' comes to '9', which is the last numeral and the highest basic figure or value. The numeral '9' is called the cardinal number as it is the highest amongst the primary list of numbers (from 1 to 9), and there is no number after it. It symbolically stands for the Supreme Being because there is nothing beyond the Supreme Being.

The miracle of 108 is that if we add the three numbers $1 + 0 + 8$ we get the number '9'. Apparently the '0' appears to have no value, but then 108 is not 'nine' but 'one hundred nine'. If we remove the '0', the remaining two digits, '1' and '8' together make the number '18' only, while merely placing the '0' in their middle enhances their value manifold. In other words, in spite of seeming to have no value of its own, the '0' makes the other two numbers enhanced in value a hundred times. Likewise, though Brahm is passive, it is Brahm that gives this creation its meaning, worth, and life.

There is another way of looking at the figure 108. The digit '0' represents the formless Brahm, the Supreme Being, who is central to this creation but is so formless and without any attributes of his own that it is like 'zero'. Brahm lends the creation all the worth it has just like the numeral '0' that has no value of its own but when added to any given number or numeral it enhances its value by ten times, by hundred times, by thousand times, and by millions and millions of times.

Brahm is the core or the center of this creation like the digit '0' in 108. Just as we lose the figure of 108 by removing the '0' from it, we lose this creation by removing Brahm from it.

The creation is envisioned as an 'egg' or a rounded ball. The numeral '0' is also shaped like an egg. The figure '1' placed before it indicates the beginning or the primary stage of creation, and the figure of '8' placed at the end indicates the maximum limit to which this creation can grow. As we have seen above, the numeral '8' is just one short of the cardinal number of '9'. Hence here it means that even the

best and the highest form of life in this creation is not complete without Brahm represented by the '0'.

The entire creation—from the basic and rudimentary form symbolized by the number '1' to the highest form represented by the number '8'—has Brahm at the center like the hub of a wheel. The complete entity that is known as this creation has a beginning represented by the numeral '1', the most developed form represented by the numeral '8', with the 'Atma' at the center represented by the number '0'.

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Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

Chapter 3

Hymns of Lord Ram from 'Ram Charit Manas' of Goswami Tulsidas

In this Chapter we shall read the following sacred Hymns of Lord Ram from Ram Charit Manas:--

(3.1) Lord Ram's Hymn by Kaushalya: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Doha no. 192 along with Chanda line nos. 1-16 that precede it.

(3.2) Lord Ram's Hymn by Sage Atri: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-24 that precede Doha no. 4.

(3.3) Lord Ram's Hymn by Sage Sutikshan: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-21 that precede Doha no. 11.

(3.4) Lord Ram's Hymn by Jatayu (the king of vultures): Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-16 that precede Doha no. 32.

(3.5) Lord Ram's Hymn by Brahma (the Creator; the first God of the Trinity): Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-22 that precede Doha no. 111.

(3.6) Lord Ram's Hymn by Indra (the King of Gods): Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-20 that precede Doha no. 113.

(3.7) Lord Ram's Hymn by Lord Shiva (the third God of the Trinity; the most enlightened amongst the Gods; the concluder of creation): Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-9 that precede Doha no. 115.

(3.8) Lord Ram's Hymn by the Vedas (the most ancient and primary scriptures): Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-24 that precede Doha no. 13.

(3.9) Lord Ram's Hymn by Lord Shiva: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-20 that precede Doha no. 14.

(3.1) Lord Ram's Hymn by Kaushalya:

Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-16 that precede Doha no. 192:

छं०. भए प्रगट कृपाला दीनदयाला कौसल्या हितकारी । १ ।
हरषित महतारी मुनि मन हारी अद्भुत रूप बिचारी ॥ २ ॥
लोचन अभिरामा तनु घनस्यामा निज आयुध भुज चारी । ३ ।
भूषन बनमाला नयन बिसाला सोभासिंधु खरारी ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

bha'e pragaṭa kṛpālā dīnadayālā kausalyā hitakārī. 1.
haraṣita mahatārī muni mana hārī adbhuta rūpa bicārī. 2.
lōcana abhirāmā tanu ghanasyāmā nija āyudha bhuja cārī. 3.
bhūṣana banamālā nayana bisālā sōbhāsindhu kharārī. 4..

The kind and merciful Lord (Vishnu), who is gracious and compassionate towards the lowly and the humble as well as the benefactor of mother Kaushalya, revealed himself before her (in the form of a child who will be later on named Lord Ram). (1)

The mother was exceedingly thrilled and overwhelmed as she observed the Lord's marvellous and most astounding form that was so extremely beautiful as to be able to steal the mind and heart of even the sages and hermits (who are usually immune to physical charms and attractions). (2)

His delightful form was dark as the (rain-bearing) clouds, and it provided joy, happiness and comfort to the eyes of the beholder. He held in his four hands his characteristic emblems (or equipments—"āyudha"). [These are—a conch-shell, a discus, a mace and a lotus.] (3)

He was wearing fine ornaments and excellent garments, and was adorned with a garland of sylvan flowers (called the "banamālā"). His eyes were large (like the lotus flower). To wit, this was how the Lord, who is an ocean of beauty and charm, and is a destroyer or slayer of the demon named Khar, revealed himself (before mother Kaushalya). (4)

कह दुइ कर जोरी अस्तुति तोरी केहि बिधि करौं अनंता । ५ ।
माया गुन ग्यानातीत अमाना बेद पुरान भनंता ॥ ६ ॥
करुना सुख सागर सब गुन आगर जेहि गावहिं श्रुति संता । ७ ।
सो मम हित लागी जन अनुरागी भयउ प्रगट श्रीकंता ॥ ८ ॥

kaha du'i kara jōrī astuti tōrī kēhi bidhi karaum anantā. 5.
 māyā guna gyānātita amānā bēda purāna bhanantā. 6.
 karunā sukha sāgara saba guna āgara jēhi gāvahiṁ śruti santā. 7.
 sō mama hita lāgī jana anurāgī bhaya'u pragaṭa śrīkantā. 8.

The mother joined her two palms (hands—"du'i kara jōrī") together and said, 'Oh Lord Anant (i.e. the Lord who has no end; who is without a beginning or end; who is infinite and eternal)! Say, how and with what words can I say a prayer to you to praise you, or show my earnest respect to you (for I am absolutely incompetent to do so, and am stunned by your august presence). (5)

Verily, the Vedas and the Purans (primary and ancient scriptures) hold and declare unequivocally that you are beyond the reach of Maya (delusions), free from the various the Gunas (attributes of creation) and transcend Gyan (knowledge), as well as are measureless and beyond comprehension. (6)

You are lauded by the exalted saints and sages as well as the scriptures as being an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness, and as being a repository of bliss, happiness and joy, as well as of all the excellent virtues. (7)

Oh! The same Lord known as 'Srikanta' (i.e. Lord Vishnu who is dear to goddess Laxmi, also known as "Sri" because she is the patron goddess of prosperity, wealth and well-being), who loves his devotees and is gracious towards them, has revealed himself for my sake and good. (8)

ब्रह्मांड निकाया निर्मित माया रोम रोम प्रति बेद कहै । ९ ।
 मम उर सो बासी यह उपहासी सुनत धीर मति थिर न रहै ॥ १० ॥
 उपजा जब ग्याना प्रभु मुसुकाना चरित बहुत बिधि कीन्ह चहै । ११ ।
 कहि कथा सुहाई मातु बुझाई जेहि प्रकार सुत प्रेम लहै ॥ १२ ॥

brahmāṇḍa nikāyā nirmita māyā rōma rōma prati bēda kahai. 9.
 mama ura sō bāsī yaha upahāsī sunata dhīra mati thira na rahai. 10.
 upajā jaba gyānā prabhu musukānā carita bahuta bidhi kīnha cahai. 11.
 kahi kathā suhāī mātu bujhāī jēhi prakāra suta prēma lahai. 12.

The Vedas assert that in each of the pores of your divine cosmic body, there are multitudes of universes (brahmāṇḍa) that have been brought forth by the creative power of Maya. (9)

That such a Great Lord of the Cosmos would stay in my womb—this is so wonderful a thing and amusing that when learned and wise sages and seers hear of it, they are absolutely confounded and awe-struck; their mind and intellect fail to comprehend this phenomenon.' (10)

When the mother came to grasp with the profundity of the occasion and its stupendous significance, when she realised the import of what she was observing before her own eyes, the Lord smiled, for he wished to do many fantastic things and perform many mysterious deeds¹. (11)

[¹To wit, the Lord was amused by the mother's submissions now when she talked as if she was a highly erudite woman who knew the reality and truth of the Lord like the back of her hands, for soon she would forget all this momentary talk of wisdom and enlightenment and start treating him as 'her' son'. This would be evident

later on in an incident when the mother had placed her child in a cradle to sleep and went to her worship-room to offer worship to the family deity. There she found the same child partaking of the offerings meant for the deity. Astonished and confounded, she rushed back to the cradle, only to find the child comfortably sleeping in it. She rushed back to the worship-room and found the child enjoying himself there with the sweets. The mother ran back and forth as she was completely dazed by this magical sight of seeing the child simultaneously at two places! She feared for some spell being cast either on her self or on the child. It was then Lord Ram once again revealed his cosmic form as the four-armed Lord Vishnu to dispel all her doubts and misgivings. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 201—to Doha no. 202.

Hence presently, this is the reason why the Lord wryly smiled at her now with great humour. He hinted to her that it is good that she has, at least for once, realised who her child is, for soon she would be so overcome by the Lord's delusion-creating powers that she would forget who the child she called as her son actually was.]

[The Lord wished to do some worldly sports or deeds, and so—] He explained the situation to her (as to why he had revealed himself) by telling her the pleasant story (or event) of her previous life when she had desired to experience the joy and exhilaration of uninhibited closeness with the Lord as a mother has with her own child, and so be able to offer her love and affection to the Lord with the freedom she would have then.² (12)

[This incident is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 142—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 152.

Briefly, the story is that king Manu and his queen Satrupa did severe Tapa or penance with a desire to have a divine glimpse of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being. When the Lord manifested himself before them, the couple sought the boon that the Lord would become their child so they would love him and shower their affection upon him in an uninhibited form, as well as enjoy the bliss and happiness of being so close to the Lord if he would graciously agree to become their child. Of course the Lord obliged, and he wanted to inform Kaushalya that it is one of the many reasons why he has now revealed himself before her—for she was Satrupa in her previous life.]

माता पुनि बोली सो मति डोली तजहु तात यह रूपा । १३ ।

कीजै सिसुलीला अति प्रियसीला यह सुख परम अनूपा ॥ १४ ॥

सुनि बचन सुजाना रोदन ठाना होइ बालक सुरभूपा । १५ ।

यह चरित जे गावहिं हरिपद पावहिं ते न परहिं भवकूपा ॥ १६ ॥

mātā puni bōlī sō mati ḍolī tajahu tāta yaha rūpā. 13.

kījai sisulīlā ati priyasīlā yaha sukha parama anūpā. 14.

suni bacana sujānā rōdana ṭhānā hō'i bālaka surabhūpā. 15.

yaha carita jē gāvahim haripada pāvahim tē na parahim bhavakūpā. 16.

The mother changed her mind as she was so dazed and overwhelmed by the Lord's cosmic and almighty form that she could not afford any longer to experience its presence and closeness, though, nonetheless, she felt exceptionally blessed and privileged and wished to enjoy the bliss and beatitude that comes with closeness with

the Lord. So, she requested the Lord as follows: ‘Oh my dear Lord! Please be kind to discard this superhuman and cosmic form (as it has overwhelmed me, and I am utterly confounded and dazed by it). (13)

Instead, please assume a more acceptable and pleasing form of a lovable child, and do act like one. Your deeds and acts in this pleasant form of a child would be very endearing, nice and pleasing for me.’ (14)

Upon hearing her request, the Lord who is the ‘God Superior amongst all the Gods’, or who is the ‘King of all the Gods’ (surabhūpā), immediately assumed the pleasant form of a little child, and began to cry aloud in the likeness of a newly born infant. (15)

[Tulsidas says that—] Anyone who sings (with devotion) this glorious event (when the ‘Lord of the universe’ transformed himself into a ‘human child’) is sure to attain the exalted abode of the Lord and never again, as a consequence, fall in the dark well of transmigration symbolised by this mortal world. (16)

दो०. बिप्र धेनु सुर संत हित लीन्ह मनुज अवतार ।

निज इच्छा निर्मित तनु माया गुन गो पार ॥ १९२ ॥

dōhā.

bipra dhēnu sura santa hita līnha manuja avatāra.

nija icchā nirmita tanu māyā guna gō pāra. 192.

Verily indeed, the Lord manifested himself as a human for the good and welfare of the Vipras (literally the ‘Brahmins’, but implying all noble and learned people), the cow (representing all humble and docile creatures), the Gods (representing all exalted souls), and the saints and sages (representing wise, enlightened and self-realised people).

The Lord who is beyond the purview of Maya (delusions) and the different Gunas, which are characteristic features that are naturally associated with Maya, revealed himself out of his own free will.

He assumed a physical form that appeared to be gross like ordinary humans—but was actually subtle in essence and divine in its reality, for it was a form that transcended Maya with its associated Gunas. (Doha no.192)

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(3.2) Lord Ram's Hymn by Sage Atri

Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-24 that precede Doha no. 4:

छं०. नमामि भक्त वत्सलं । कृपालु शील कोमलं ॥ १
भजामि ते पदांबुजं । अकामिनां स्वधामदं ॥ २ ॥

chanda.

namāmi bhakta vatsalaṁ. kṛpālu śīla kōmalaṁ. 1.
bhajāmi tē padāmbujaṁ. akāmināṁ svadhāmadāṁ. 2.

‘Oh Lord who is so fond of and graceful towards your devotees—I bow reverentially before you. You are merciful and kind by nature, as well as of a sweet, gentle and compassionate disposition. (1)

I worship your lotus-like holy feet which grants attainment of your divine abode to your selfless devotees. [That is, your devotees who worship your holy feet selflessly are vouchsafed a place in your holy abode.] (2)

निकाम श्याम सुंदरं । भवाञ्जुनाथ मंदरं ॥ ३ ॥
प्रफुल्ल कंज लोचनं । मदादि दोष मोचनं ॥ ४ ॥

nikāma śyāma sundaraṁ. bhavāmbunātha mandaraṁ. 3.
praphulla kaṁja lōcanaṁ. madādi dōṣa mōcanaṁ. 4.

Your dark form (physical appearance; body) is exceptionally beautiful and bewitchingly charming. You are like the great Mandrachal Mountain to churn the ocean of transmigration¹. [To wit, if one wishes to make the best of life in this world and free oneself from the endless cycle of birth and death and its attendant sufferings and horrors even while living an ordinary life and going about one's ordained duties as destined for him by his destiny in the mundane mortal world, if one wishes to obtain spiritual bliss and peace despite being surrounded by sufferings and pain, then in all sooth one would find what one wants in if one takes shelter in your holy feet and worships you. You can provide the creature all that he desires, all that would be in his best interests.] (3)

[Note—¹This metaphor refers to an ancient event narrated in the Purans according to which the celestial ocean was churned by the Gods and the Demons in some ancient time in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternal life and bliss. To do the churning, they made the Mandrachal Mountain as the churning rod, and the legendary Seshnath as the rope with which to turn this mountain.]

Your eyes are (large and beautiful) like an open lotus flower. You free the creature (i.e. your devotees who have taken shelter with you) from the negative qualities of Mada (arrogance; vanity; pride) and other such vices. (4)

प्रलंब बाहु विक्रमं । प्रभोऽप्रमेय वैभवं ॥ ५ ॥

निषंग चाप सायकं । धरं त्रिलोक नायकं ॥ ६ ॥

pralamba bāhu vikramaṁ. prabhō'pramēya vaibhavaṁ. 5.
niṣaṅga cāpa sāyakaṁ. dharaṁ trilōka nāyakaṁ. 6.

Oh Lord (prabhō)! Your long arms have such stupendous strength and your glory is so immeasurable and profound that the mind and the intellect cannot fathom and comprehend them. (5)

You are the Lord and Leader of the world, the one who holds a bow (in his hands) and carry a quiver full of arrows (tied to his waist). (6)

दिनेश वंश मंडनं । महेश चाप खंडनं ॥ ७ ॥

मुनींद्र संत रंजनं । सुरारि वृंद भंजनं ॥ ८ ॥

dinēśa vanśa maṇḍanaṁ. mahēśa cāpa khaṇḍanaṁ. 7.
munīndra santa raṇjanaṁ. surāri vṛnda bhaṇjanaṁ. 8.

You are like an ornament for the Solar Race. You are the one who had broken the great Bow of Lord Shiva¹. (7)

You provide joy and happiness to sages, hermits and saints. You are a friend of the Gods, and destroy or eliminate their enemies (or their tormentors), the demons². (8)

[Note—¹This refers to the story where Lord Ram had broken the Bow of Lord Shiva at Janakpur that was declared as a precondition for marrying Sita by her father King Janak. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 249—to Doha no. 264.

²Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 186.]

मनोज वैरि वंदितं । अजादि देव सेवितं ॥ ९ ॥

विशुद्ध बोध विग्रहं । समस्त दूषणापहं ॥ १० ॥

manōja vairi vanditaṁ. ajādi dēva sēvitaṁ. 9.
viśud'dha bōdha vighraṁ. samasta dūṣaṇāpahaṁ. 10.

You are adored and worshipped by Lord Shiva who is an enemy (or the destroyer) of Kamdeo (the patron God of passion and lust)¹.

You are served by the creator Brahma, the most ancient of the Gods, as well as by all other Gods. (9)

Verily, your form is an embodiment of pure consciousness (i.e. you are a personified form of cosmic Consciousness). You are the one who destroys or eliminates all faults and vices in a creature as well as all evils in the world. (10)

[Note—¹This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Doha no. 82—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 88.]

नमामि इंदिरा पतिं । सुखाकरं सतां गतिं ॥ ११ ॥
भजे सशक्ति सानुजं । शची पति प्रियानुजं ॥ १२ ॥

namāmi indirā patim. sukhākaram satām gatim. 11.
bhajē saśakti sānujam. śacī pati priyānujam. 12.

Oh the Lord (husband) of goddess Laxmi (i.e. Lord Vishnu)¹— I bow reverentially before you! You are a mine of joy, happiness and delight, and the only true destination that is so eagery sought by noble, holy and pious souls (*satām gatim*). (11)

Oh dear younger brother (“*priyānujam*”)² of Indra, the husband of Sachi (and the King of Gods; “*śacī pati*”)! I worship and adore you alongside the personified form of cosmic Shakti (Mother Nature and its dynamism; represented by Sita, Lord Ram’s divine consort) and your younger brother (Laxman who is regarded as an incarnation of Seshnath, the legendary thousand hooded celestial serpent). (12)

[¹This form of address for Lord Ram is appropriate because he was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Supreme Being.

²This refers to Lord Vaaman who was a dwarf incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and said to be the younger brother of Indra, the King of Gods, because he was born as a son of Aditi, the mother of the Gods, and as a younger brother of Indra who was the senior-most God.]

त्वदङ्घ्रि मूल ये नराः । भजन्ति हीन मत्सराः ॥ १३ ॥
पतन्ति नो भवार्णवे । वितर्क वीचि संकुले ॥ १४ ॥

tvadaṅghri mūla yē narāḥ. bhajanti hīna matsarāḥ. 13.
patanti nō bhavārṇavē. vitarka vīci saṅkulē. 14.

A person who frees himself from such vices as ‘Matsarya’ (“*matsarāḥ*”; jealousy, ill-will and malice) and worships your holy feet, verily such a person does not fall in the tumultuous ocean representing this mortal world (known commonly as the “Bhava-sagar”; “*bhavārṇavē*”) that consists of surging, buffeting wild waves symbolising countless doubts, uncertainties, debates, wranglings and confusions that are so characteristic of life in this delusory world. (13-14)

विविक्त वासिनः सदा । भजन्ति मुक्तये मुदा ॥ १५ ॥
निरस्य इंद्रियादिकं । प्रयांति ते गतिं स्वकं ॥ १६ ॥

vivikta vāsinah sadā. bhajanti muktayē mudā. 15.
nirasya indriyādikam. prayānti tē gatiṁ svakam. 16.

Those who live in seclusion and strive to attain Mukti (spiritual liberation, deliverance) by practicing self-control over their sense organs and abstaining from all temptations even as they worship you cheerfully and willingly (as also with due devotion and faith)—verily, they do obtain the exalted stature of self-realisation (and enlightenment that is a natural corollary to it). (15-16)

तमेकमद्भुतं प्रभुं । निरीहमीश्वरं विभुं ॥ १७ ॥
जगद्गुरुं च शाश्वतं । तुरीयमेव केवलं ॥ १८ ॥

tamēkamadbhutaṁ prabhuṁ. nirīhamīśvaraṁ vibhuṁ. 17.
jagadguruṁ ca śāśvataṁ. turīyamēva kēvalaṁ. 18.

I offer my obeisance to the Lord who is most mysterious, unique and outstanding in this entire creation (tamēkamadbhutaṁ), who is all able and almighty (prabhuṁ), who is the Lord of everything in existence and the one who has no desires whatsoever (nirīhamīśvaraṁ), who is all-pervading and all-encompassing as well as the majestic and omnipotent Lord of the world (vibhuṁ), [17]---

---who is the Guru (guide, teacher and preceptor) of the entire world (jagadguruṁ), who is true and eternal (śāśvataṁ), who has a transcendental existence known as “Turiya” (turīyamēva) and lives in his true form which is the ‘Self’ or the pure transcendental Consciousness that has no parallel (kēvalaṁ). [18] (17-18)

भजामि भाव वल्लभं । कुयोगिनां सुदुर्लभं ॥ १९ ॥
स्वभक्त कल्प पादपं । समं सुसेव्यमन्वहं ॥ २० ॥

bhajāmi bhāva vallabhaṁ. kuyōgināṁ sudurlabhaṁ. 19.
svabhakta kalpa pādapaṁ. samaṁ susēvyamanvahaṁ. 20.

I worship and offer my obeisance (bhajāmi) to the Lord who is fond of and endeared by having loving emotions that are sincere (as he does not like pretentions and deceit; “bhāva vallabhaṁ”), who is beyond reach for those who are not worthy of accessing the Lord (as they are indulgent in this gross world and devoid of piety and other fine qualities and noble virtues that entitles one to be eligible to attain nearness to the Lord; “kuyōgināṁ sudurlabhaṁ”), [19]---

---who is like a personified form of the Kalpa Tree (the evergreen tree of the Gods that is supposed to grant all wishes) for his devotees (as the latter can obtain all that they desire by merely praying to the Lord and taking shelter with him; “svabhakta kalpa pādapaṁ”), and who is worthy of worshipping and serving cheerfully and with delight at all times (samaṁ susēvyamanvahaṁ). [20] (19-20)

अनूप रूप भूपतिं । नतोऽहमुर्विजा पतिं ॥ २१ ॥
 प्रसीद मे नमामि ते । पदाब्ज भक्ति देहि मे ॥ २२ ॥

anūpa rūpa bhūpatiṁ. natō'hamurvijā patiṁ. 21.
 prasīda mē namāmi tē. padābja bhakti dēhi mē. 22.

Oh Lord who is matchlessly beautiful and bewitchingly charming (anūpa rūpa), and who is the Lord of the earth (bhūpatiṁ)! I bow reverentially before Lord Ram who is the Lord (husband) of Janki (Sita) (natō'hamurvijā patiṁ)! (21)

Lord, be pleased with me (prasīda mē); I most reverentially bow before you (mē namāmi tē). Please grant me devotion for your lotus-like holy feet (padābja bhakti dēhi mē). (22)

पठन्ति ये स्तवं इदं । नरादरेण ते पदं ॥ २३ ॥
 व्रजन्ति नात्र संशयं । त्वदीय भक्ति संयुताः ॥ २४ ॥

paṭhanti yē stavam idam. narādarēṇa tē padam. 23.
 vrajanti nātra sanśayam. tvadīya bhakti sanyutāḥ. 24.

Those people who recite this hymn with devotion and faith, verily, they are blessed with having devotion for you, and they obtain your exalted supreme abode: there is no iota of doubt about it. (23-24)

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(3.3) Lord Ram's Hymn by Sage Sutikshan

Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-21 that precede Doha no. 11:

चौ०. कह मुनि प्रभु सुनु बिनती मोरी । अस्तुति करौं कवन बिधि तोरी ॥ १ ॥
 महिमा अमित मोरि मति थोरी । रबि सन्मुख खद्योत अँजोरी ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

kaha muni prabhu sunu binatī mōrī. astuti karaum kavana bidhi tōrī. 1.
 mahimā amita mōri mati thōrī. rabi sanmukha khadyōta amjōrī. 2.

Sage Sutikshan (a disciple of sage Agastya) prayed to Lord Ram as follows: 'Oh Lord! Please hear my prayer. How am I to sing your praises and sufficiently express

myself (because neither am I competent enough to do so, nor would whatever I may say be apt enough to sufficiently extol your glories with limitations that are inherent in the spoken word)? (1)

Your glories are immeasurable and your majesty is supreme, whilst my intellect and comprehension has severe limitations, and scant is likewise my wit. To draw a parallel, my abilities as far as extolling your glories and praising your majesty are like a fire-fly when compared to the brightness of the sun! [So, say, how can I praise you, how can I sing your glories, and how am I to extol your virtues just like the fire-fly that cannot compare its brightness with that of the sun?] (2)

श्याम तामरस दाम शरीरं । जटा मुकुट परिधन मुनिचीरं ॥ ३ ॥

पाणि चाप शर कटि तूणीरं । नौमि निरंतर श्रीरघुवीरं ॥ ४ ॥

śyāma tamarasa dāma śarīraṁ. jaṭā mukuṭa paridhana municīraṁ. 3.
pāṇi cāpa śara kaṭi tūṇīraṁ. naumi nirantara śrīraghuvīraṁ. 4.

Your divine form is dark like a garland or string of blue lotuses. You wear a crown of matted hairs on your head, and attired in clothes that are like those of hermits. (3)

Oh Lord Raghubir (śrīraghuvīraṁ: the brave Lord of the line of king Raghu; Lord Ram)! You hold a bow and an arrow in your hands, and have a quiver tied to your waist. (4)

मोह विपिन घन दहन कृशानुः । संत सरोरुह कानन भानुः ॥ ५ ॥

निशिचर करि वरूथ मृगराजः । त्रातु सदा नो भव खग बाजः ॥ ६ ॥

mōha vipina ghana dahana kṛśānuḥ. santa sarōruha kānana bhānuḥ. 5.
niśicara kari varūtha mṛgarājaḥ. trātu sadā nō bhava khaga bājāḥ. 6.

You are like the fire that burns or destroys the wild forest representing Moha (worldly delusions; attachments and infatuations; indulgences and temptations).

You are like the sun to make the garden of lotuses representing sages, seers and hermits bloom and feel cheerful. [The lotus flower opens its petals in the day when the sun is seen in the sky. In this analogy, the exalted sages, saints, seers and hermits feel exhilarated and delighted when they remember Lord Ram and meditate upon him.] (5)

For the hordes of elephants representing demons and other evil ones, you are verily like the lion. [Though the elephant is larger in size and stronger physically than the lion, the latter is easily able to overcome and kill the former. Likewise, Lord Ram is easily able to subdue and vanquish the scourge of the demons despite their being superior in numbers, size of the body, physical powers and strength.]

Similarly, you are like the hawk when it comes to killing (or eliminating) the bird symbolising 'Bhava' (the cycle of birth and death in this mortal world). [To wit, you provide your devotees the boon of getting freedom from the cycle of transmigration.] (6)

अरुण नयन राजीव सुवेशं । सीता नयन चकोर निशेशं ॥ ७ ॥
हर हृदि मानस बाल मरालं । नौमि राम उर बाहु विशालं ॥ ८ ॥

aruṇa nayana rājīva suvēśaṁ. sītā nayana cakōra niśēśaṁ. 7.
hara hr̥di mānasa bāla marālaṁ. naumi rāma ura bāhu viśālaṁ. 8.

You have eyes that are like the pink (or red-hued) lotus flower, and your general visage and appearance, your divine form, is magnificent and charming.

You are like the moon for the bird called ‘Chakor’ that represent the eyes of Sita. [The ‘Chakor’ bird is enamoured of the moon, and when the latter rises in the sky, the bird fixes its gaze on it so much so that it becomes oblivious of everything else and follows the course of the moon across the sky by tilting its head accordingly. Likewise, Sita too loves Lord Ram very much and keeps the Lord within her sight.] (7)

In the heart of Shiva which is like the lake known as ‘Mansarovar’, you are like a young Swan that floats majestically on this lake of crystal clear water. [This lake is located in the upper reaches of the Himalayan Mountain range, near Mt. Kailash, the mythological abode of Lord Shiva. The lake has many a Swans floating on its crystal clear water. In this analogy, Lord Shiva’s heart is compared to this lake because it is pure, pious, holy and uncorrupt. Shiva always remembers Lord Ram, meditates upon the latter and reveres him as his deity.]

Oh Lord Ram, I bow most reverentially before you (naumi rāma). You have a broad chest and long arms (i.e. the Lord is hugely magnanimous and compassionate in heart, and is always ready to lend his helping hand to him who needs it). (8)

संशय सर्प ग्रसन उरगादः । शमन सुकर्कश तर्क विषादः ॥ ९ ॥
भव भंजन रंजन सुर यूथः । त्रातु सदा नो कृपा वरूथः ॥ १० ॥

sanśaya sarpa grasana uragādaḥ. śamana sukarkaśa tarka viṣādaḥ. 9.
bhava bhanjana ranjana sura yūthaḥ. trātu sadā nō kṛpā varūthaḥ. 10.

He (Lord Ram) is like the legendary bird known as Garud (the mount of Lord Vishnu; the divine Eagle) when it comes to eliminating doubts and confusions which are like snakes that are easily devoured by the former. [Garud is a sworn enemy of serpents; it swoops down on them and gobbles them up. In this analogy it is meant that Lord Ram can remove all worldly delusions, doubts and confusions if one seeks his shelter just like the case of Garud devouring all snakes without any effort.]

He can destroy the gravest of grief and despair that arises out of angry quarrels and heated disputes. [That is, if one faces this situation, then he can calm down and gain peace of mind and heart if he remembers the Lord.] (9)

He can rupture or break the endless cycle of transmigration, and provides joy and delight to the community of Gods.

Let that treasury of kindness, grace, mercy and compassion be benevolent and gracious upon us! (10)

निर्गुण सगुण विषम सम रूपं । ज्ञान गिरा गोतीतमनूपं ॥ ११ ॥

अमलमखिलमनवद्यमपारं । नौमि राम भंजन महि भारं ॥ १२ ॥

nirguṇa saguṇa viṣama sama rūpaṁ. jñāna girā gōtīṭamanūpaṁ. 11.

amalamakhilamanavadyamapāraṁ. naumi rāma bhañjana mahi bhāraṁ. 12.

The Lord is unique, matchless, and most mysterious in many respects. For instance, he is both ‘Nirguna’ (without attributes and forms) as well as ‘Saguna’ (one who has a distinct physical form and characteristics)¹, and he is variable and divergent (viṣama) as well as uniform, steady and unchangeable (sama)².

He is unique and unparalleled; he is beyond the reach of Gyan (knowledge and wisdom), Vaani (speech; one who cannot be described) and Indris (both the gross and the subtle organs of perception)³. (11)

[¹The ‘Nirguna’ form of Lord Ram refers to his cosmic form which is pure Consciousness, subtle, sublime, all-pervading and invisible. The ‘Saguna’ form refers to the same Lord who had revealed himself as a human being with the name “Ram”. As a human, he had physical form and characteristic features like all humans.

²The essential form of Lord Ram is ‘pure consciousness’ that is eternal and unchangeable. He is steady and uniform in his mind and heart. But since he had assumed a human form he showed a wide variety of emotions and sentiments like ordinary human beings—i.e. he showed variations and changes in his behaviour, attitude and dealings in this world which would be at odds with his primary character. This is why the Lord is called a ‘maverick player’ who does not conform to any given standards and yardstick.

³There are five gross organs of perception—viz. eyes that see, nose that smells, skin that touches and feels, tongue that tastes, and ears that hear. The subtle organs are the mind and the intellect which analyse whatever information is received through the gross organs to arrive at a conclusion about any given situation. In essence it is meant here that it is not possible to know who the Lord actually is by employing any instrument that a person normally employs to learn about any thing. In other words, Lord Ram transcends all form of knowledge.]

I bow most reverentially before Lord Ram who eliminates the burden of the earth, and who is most beautiful and unique, who is pure, uncorrupt, clean of all taints and is absolutely faultless, and who is eternal as he is without a beginning and an end. (12)

भक्त कल्पपादप आरामः । तर्जन क्रोध लोभ मद कामः ॥ १३ ॥

अति नागर भव सागर सेतुः । त्रातु सदा दिनकर कुल केतुः ॥ १४ ॥

bhakta kalpapādapa ārāmaḥ. tarjana krōdha lōbha mada kāmāḥ. 13.

ati nāgara bhava sāgara sētuḥ. trātu sadā dinakara kula kētuḥ. 14.

He is like a garden of Kalpa Trees for his devotees. [That is, he fulfills all the wishes of his devotees. The Kalpa Tree is the all wish-fulfilling tree of the Gods. Even one single Kalpa Tree can grant all wishes, so one can well imagine the amount of rewards one would get if one has access to a garden full of such trees! Even the Gods can grant wishes, but Lord Ram is simply like a huge royal treasury of boons and grants.]

He scares away or chases away (i.e. removes) all negativities and sufferings such as those arising out of Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Mada (arrogance, ego and haughtiness) and Kaam (lust and passion). [In fact, every living being suffers from these vices and their horrifying consequences. By taking shelter with Lord Ram and seeking the Lord's blessings, one is easily able to get rid of these evils and their attendant problems.] (13)

He is an expert and skilled in all the virtues. He is like a bridge that can help a creature to cross over this ocean-like world. [It is easy to build a bridge over a river, but not across an ocean. An expert swimmer can swim across a river, but would drown in an ocean. Here it means that if one wishes to get over the horrors of this world and break free from the cycle of birth and death, it would be better for him to seek shelter with and help from Lord Ram.]

Oh Lord who is like a 'flag' (i.e. the most exalted member) of the Solar Race! Please be kind to always extend your protection to me. (14)

अतुलित भुज प्रताप बल धामः । कलि मल विपुल विभंजन नामः ॥ १५ ॥
धर्म वर्म नर्मद गुण ग्रामः । संतत शं तनोतु मम रामः ॥ १६ ॥

atulita bhuja pratāpa bala dhāmaḥ. kali mala vipula vibhanjāna nāmaḥ. 15.
dharma varma narmada guṇa grāmaḥ. santata śaṁ tanōtu mama rāmaḥ. 16.

The majesty and powers, the strength and reach of the Lord's arms are legendary and unparalleled. Indeed, he is a treasury of astounding glory, of stupendous majesty, of immeasurable strength and endless powers. [To wit, no one, even the powerful Gods or anyone else in this creation can ever compare with Lord Ram's strength and powers, as well as his ability to protect his devotees.]

His divine and holy name is such that it can destroy or neutralise the gravest of sins and their consequences in the present age of Kaliyug (which is full of evil and vices). (15)

He is like a shield of Dharma (virtues of righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, nobility and ethics). [The Lord protects and upholds these glorious virtues.]

In all sooth, his glorious virtues give joy, delight and happiness. [To wit, Lord Ram is such a huge repository of excellent qualities and noble characters that when one remembers him and comes to know more about the Lord before whom one has surrendered, one is thrilled and excited, one feels privileged and very glad to be acquainted with such a noble, gracious and exalted Lord as Lord Ram.]

I pray that Lord Ram grant auspiciousness and welfare to me in an ever increasing mode. [That is, let me be blessed more and more with each passing day and year of my life.] (16)

जदपि बिरज व्यापक अबिनासी । सब के हृदयँ निरंतर बासी ॥ १७ ॥
तदपि अनुज श्री सहित खरारी । बसतु मनसि मम काननचारी ॥ १८ ॥

jadapi biraja byāpaka abināsī. saba kē hr̥dayam̐ nirantara bāsī. 17.
tadapi anuja śrī sahita kharārī. basatu manasi mama kānanacārī. 18.

Though you (Lord Ram) have a majestic presence and magnificent virtues (befitting you as the Lord of the world), though you are all-pervading and omnipresent, though you are imperishable (because you are eternal and infinite), and though you live in the heart of all living beings (in the form of their Atma or pure consciousness) [17]---

---still, oh the destroyer of the demon Khar (kharārī), please live in my heart in the form with which you roam in the forest with Sita and Laxman¹. [18] (17-18)

[Here, sage Sutikshan asks Lord Ram to bless him so that he can remember the Lord always in his pleasing form with which he had come to the sage's hermitage to pay a visit. The wise and enlightened sage knew all about spiritual philosophy and metaphysics, but they are dry subjects that are best dealt with in an intellectual gymnasium; they do not appeal to the heart which longs for love and affection that would only arise when something pleasing and appealing to the heart as well as the mind is found. And this was found by the learned sage in the form of Lord Ram who stood before him. In fact, the sage saw in Lord Ram a personified form of all knowledge and enlightenment of all hues. When the sun was at hand, what was the use of searching for another source of light?]

जे जानहिं ते जानहुँ स्वामी । सगुन अगुन उर अंतरजामी ॥ १९ ॥

जो कोसल पति राजिव नयना । करउ सो राम हृदय मम अयना ॥ २० ॥

jē jānahim̐ tē jānahum̐ svāmī. saguna aguna ura antarajāmī. 19.
jō kōsala pati rājiva nayanā. kara'u sō rāma hr̥daya mama ayanā. 20.

Oh Lord! Those who think themselves to be learned and knowledgeable because they regard you as one who has a Saguna as well as a Nirguna form, as one who resides in the heart or inner-self of all living beings (as their Atma or pure consciousness)—let them think whatever they want, for I am not concerned with it.

As for me, this is all that I want (and pray to you to grant me this single boon): Let the lotus-eyed Lord Ram, the Lord of the Kaushal clan (i.e. the ruling family of Ayodhya in which Lord Ram was born), make my heart his only abode. [That is, let Lord Ram live in my heart in the lovable form in which I behold the Lord before my eyes. I don't want anything else. I am not interested in metaphysics and spiritual philosophy sans this request.] (19-20)

अस अभिमान जाइ जनि भोरे । मैं सेवक रघुपति पति मोरे ॥ २१ ॥

सुनि मुनि बचन राम मन भाए । बहुरि हरषि मुनिबर उर लाए ॥ २२ ॥

asa abhimāna jā'i jani bhōrē. maim̐ sēvaka raghupati pati mōrē. 21.
suni muni bacana rāma mana bhā'ē. bahuri haraṣi munibara ura lā'ē. 22.

Let me not be deprived of or forget this one single privilege and exalted feeling, even for a fleeting moment, that I am a humble servant (devotee) and Raghupati (Sri Ram) is my Lord!' (21)

Lord Ram was exceedingly pleased upon hearing the words of the sage (Sutikshan). Feeling thrilled and delighted, the Lord cheerfully embraced the exalted sage and clasped him to his bosom. (22)

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(3.4) Lord Ram's Hymn by Jatau (the king of vultures)

Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chanda line nos. 1-16 that precede Doha no. 32:

छं०. जय राम रूप अनूप निर्गुन सगुन गुन प्रेरक सही । १ ।
दससीस बाहु प्रचंड खंडन चंड सर मंडन मही ॥ २ ॥
पाथोद गात सरोज मुख राजीव आयत लोचनं । ३ ।
नित नौमि रामु कृपाल बाहु बिसाल भव भय मोचनं ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

jaya rāma rūpa anūpa nirguna saguna guna prēraka sahī. 1.
dasasīsa bāhu pracaṇḍa khaṇḍana caṇḍa sara maṇḍana mahī. 2.
pāthōda gāta sarōja mukha rājīva āyata lōcanaṁ. 3.
nita naumi rāmu kṛpāla bāhu bisāla bhava bhaya mōcanaṁ. 4.

Jatau, the aged king of vultures, prayed to Lord Ram as follows: 'Glory to Lord Ram! Oh Lord, your beauty and charm are matchless. You are both Nirguna and Saguna at the same time¹. And verily it is said in all sooth and without any gainsay that you are the one who inspires all the good qualities known as 'Sata Guna' to come to the fore, play a dominant role and prevail in this creation (and overcome the resistance offered by the negative qualities known as the Tama Guna, and even supersede the mediocre ones known as Raja Guna)². (1)

Oh Lord, you have picked up the fierce arrow in order to cut-off the terrible ten arms of Ravana (the cruel demon king who has been inflicting undescribable horrors on this earth as well in the heaven)³.

You are the one who is like the earth's ornament. [The earth at that time was suffering horribly due to the demons, and none of its mighty kings or warriors who prided themselves for their valour and strength-of-arms dared to take on the cruel demons. At that time, it was Lord Ram who alone took up the responsibility to protect the earth. Hence, he is being honoured as the 'ornament of earth'.] (2)

You have a dark complexion like that of a rain-bearing cloud; your pretty face is like a lotus flower, and your eyes are wide and reddish or pinkish like a lotus flower of this hue. (3)

Indeed I bow daily most reverentially before the merciful and gracious Lord Ram who has long, muscular and well-built arms, and who provides (grants)

liberation and deliverance from this world of delusions and transmigration, called the 'Bhava'. (4)

[¹That is, one the one hand you have no specific attributes that would define you exclusively because you are all-encompassing, and all the qualities that characterise an individual in the creation are vested in you, making you neutral in all respects. This refers to your cosmic, invisible, all-pervading, sublime and subtle form that is nothing but pure Consciousness. This is your 'Nirguna' form.

On the other hand, you have assumed a physical form as a human being recognised by the name of "Ram". Hence obviously, you have certain definite characters and qualities that distinguish you from others. This makes your form 'Saguna'.

²The creation is a mix of good and bad qualities. Which of the two dominate marks the character and personality of an individual entity as well as of any particular age or time in history. At the beginning of creation, the excellent qualities, known as the 'Sata Guna' played a key role. As time passed, the worst of the qualities, known as the 'Tama Guna', reared their heads and suppressed the good ones. Somewhere in between there was some sort of balance because the transition was gradual. This transitory phase was qualified by the presence of the 'Raja Guna'. Even at the worst of times, all the three sorts of Gunas are present in this creation; what matters is which one of them is prominent and dominant, and which is dormant and relegated to the back. The Lord is the supreme ruler and caretaker of this creation, and like any senior in a household he would naturally favour the noble qualities. So it is said here that Lord Ram motivates and helps the good qualities, known as 'Sata Guna' to remain steadfast and win the battle of wits!

³The horrors perpetrated by the demons have been described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 179—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 184.]

बलमप्रमेयमनादिमज्जमव्यक्तमेकमगोचरं । ५ ।

गोबिंद गोपर द्वंद्वहर बिग्यानघन धरनीधरं ॥ ६ ॥

जे राम मंत्र जपंत संत अनंत जन मन रंजनं । ७ ।

नित नौमि राम अकाम प्रिय कामादि खल दल गंजनं ॥ ८ ॥

balamapramēyamanādimajamabyaktamēkamagōcaraṁ. 5.

gōbinda gōpara dvandvahara bigyānaghana dharanīdharaṁ. 6.

jē rāma mantra japanta santa ananta jana mana ranjanam. 7.

nita naumi rāma akāma priya kāmādi khala dala ganjanam. 8.

You have infinite and immeasurable strength and powers. You have no end or beginning, and therefore you do not have a birth. You have no form (this is definable, describable, specific, and physically visible).

You are one, indivisible and without a second. [Though this entire creation consists of countless units each different from the other, and each said to have their origin in you, you still remain one and the same. It is like the case of water from the vast ocean being kept in countless jars of varying shapes and sizes and made from different materials. Will the ocean change, or would the contents of these innumerable containers be anything but water of the ocean?]

You are unmanifest; you are not visible to and cannot be perceived by the physical organ that sees things in this world (i.e. the eye). [This is because your essential form is formless, attributeless, all-pervading, sublime and subtle; it is nothing but pure consciousness. In spite of this, those who are wise, are learned in the principles taught by the scriptures, are enlightened and self-realised, can easily experience your presence within their own self as their Atma, as their true 'self', albeit it is also true that you take a physical form to please and oblige your devotees when they do want it to be so.] (5)

You are known as 'Govind'—which means 'He who can be known through the words of the Vedas (scriptures)'. [That is, the best way to be acquainted with you and to understand who you are is by understanding the meaning of the scriptures.]

You are beyond the reach of any of the organs of perception and action of the creature's body. [These organs are: organs of perception such as the eye, nose, tongue, skin and ear, and the organs of action such as the hand, legs and mouth. These are the gross organs of the physical body. In other words, the Lord God cannot be accessed by employing expertise of any of the components of the gross body because these organs have their own limitations that are restricted to the gross physical world, and they cannot reach anything that is subtle and sublime.]

You dispel all fears arising out of the pairs of opposites in this world (such as joy and sorrow; pleasure and pain; success and failure; birth and death; etc.)

You are an embodiment of Vigyan (the knowledge that leads to the pure consciousness).

You are the sustainer, protector, supporter and well-wisher of the earth, and take care of it as well as of all its inhabitants. (6)

You provide joy, delight and happiness to the Mana (heart and mind) of all the countless saints and devotees who always adore and worship you, and who always repeat your sacred Mantras. (7)

I reverentially bow before Lord Ram who loves and is loved by those who are selfless in their attitude and desire nothing for themselves; and who vanquishes such vices and evil tendencies as Kaam (lust, passion) etc. (8)

जेहि श्रुति निरंजन ब्रह्म व्यापक बिरज अज कहि गावहीं । ९ ।

करि ध्यान ग्यान बिराग जोग अनेक मुनि जेहि पावहीं ॥ १० ॥

सो प्रगट करुना कंद सोभा बृंद अग जग मोहई । ११ ।

मम हृदय पंकज भृंग अंग अनंग बहु छबि सोहई ॥ १२ ॥

jēhi śruti niraṅjana brahma byāpaka biraja aja kahi gāvahīm. 9.

kari dhyāna gyāna birāga jōga anēka muni jēhi pāvahīm. 10.

sō pragaṭa karunā kanda sōbhā bṛnda aga jaga mōha'ī. 11.

mama hṛdaya paṅkaja bhṛṅga aṅga anaṅga bahu chabi sōha'ī. 12.

He (the Lord) who is extolled by the Srutis (ancient scriptures that have come down through the ages by the oral tradition) as being pure and free from all taints (cause by delusions), who is known as 'Brahm' (the Supreme Being who personifies Consciousness), who is all pervading and omnipresent, who is passionless, faultless and without any other kind of shortcomings, and who is without a birth (because he is eternal and imperishable)--- (9),

---he who is attained by exalted saints, hermits and ascetics by employing a number of methods such as Dhyan (discretion, contemplation and deep thought), Gyan (enlightenment and self-realisation), Vairagya (renunciation and dispassion towards this world of sense objects; by overcoming all temptations), and Yoga (meditation)--- (10),

---verily and in all sooth he is the same Lord, the eternal fount of mercy and compassion, as well as a treasury of all beauty, who has manifested himself (as a human being recognised by the name of Lord Ram) to please, oblige and give pleasure to the whole world, both the inanimate and the animate. (11)

He (Lord Ram in his manifested form) is like a honey-bee as far as my lotus like heart is concerned because the latter gets immense pleasure and unbound joy when it sees the Lord whose body reflects the beauty of countless Kamdeos (cupids; the patron deity of beauty and charm). [Just like the lotus flower welcomes the sight of the bee hovering over it and expresses its joy with a gesture of opening its petals, I too thoroughly delight at the bewitching sight of Lord Ram standing before me, spreading his matchless charm all around. I welcome him with a wide open heart! I wish he stays here in my heart to give me the privilege of enjoying his company at all times.] (12)

जो अगम सुगम सुभाव निर्मल असम सम सीतल सदा । १३ ।

पस्यंति जं जोगी जतन करि करत मन गो बस सदा ॥ १४ ॥

सो राम रमा निवास संतत दास बस त्रिभुवन धनी । १५ ।

मम उर बसउ सो समन संसृति जासु कीरति पावनी ॥ १६ ॥

jō agama sugama subhāva nirmala asama sama sītala sadā. 13.

pasyanti jam jōgī jatana kari karata mana gō basa sadā. 14.

sō rāma ramā nivāsa santata dāsa basa tribhuvana dhanī. 15.

mama ura basa'u sō samana sansṛti jāsu kīrati pāvanī. 16.

He (Lord Ram) who is at once both inaccessible as well as easily attained, who has an innocent or a neutral temperament and a faultless disposition, who is both partial and impartial (i.e. who favours his devotees and those who seek his help, shelter and refuge while being an impartial, neutral and an impassionate judge for the creation in general), who is always calm, poised, unruffled and serene---(13),

---who is perceived by ascetics after having practiced exemplary self-restraint over their sense organs and the mind over a long period of time by employing a number of great efforts that enables them to do so---(14),

---that Lord who is the Supreme Lord of the whole world that consists of three divisions (such as the heaven, the earth and the nether world), and who is the Lord (divine consort) of Rama (goddess Laxmi)—verily, he remains always within the reach and beck-and-call of his devotees.

I pray: Let that Lord, whose divine praises and holy glories provide freedom from the cycle of birth and death (i.e. who grants liberation and deliverance from transmigration by his mere remembrance), reside eternally in my heart. (16)

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(3.5) Lord Ram's Hymn by Brahma
(the Creator; the first God of the Trinity)

Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line nos. 1—22 that precede Doha no. 111:

छं०. जय राम सदा सुखधाम हरे । रघुनायक सायक चाप धरे ॥ १ ॥
भव बारन दारन सिंह प्रभो । गुन सागर नागर नाथ बिभो ॥ २ ॥

chanda.

jaya rāma sadā sukhadhāma harē. raghunāyaka sāyaka cāpa dharē. 1.
bhava bārana dārana simha prabhō. guna sāgara nāgara nātha bibhō. 2.

‘Glory be to Lord Ram who is an eternal abode of happiness, joy and delight, and who eliminates all the sorrows and miseries (i.e. things that are the opposite of happiness and joy) (of his devotees).

Lord Raghunath (i.e. Lord Ram who was a Lord of the race of kings descending from Raghu who ruled over Ayodhya) holds a bow and an arrow in his hands. (1)

Oh Lord (prabhō)! You are like a lion for eliminating the fearsome and strong elephant representing the cycle of birth and death (or the cycle of transmigration in this mortal and gross world) that is known as ‘Bhava’.

Oh Lord (nātha)! You are an ocean of excellent virtues and noblest of qualities, and you are honoured by the epithet of ‘Vibho’, i.e. one who is all-pervading, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, wise, clever, almighty, eternal and supreme. (2)

तन काम अनेक अनूप छबी । गुन गावत सिद्ध मुनींद्र कबी ॥ ३ ॥
जसु पावन रावन नाग महा । खगनाथ जथा करि कोप गहा ॥ ४ ॥

tana kāma anēka anūpa chabī. guna gāvata sid'dha munīndra kabī. 3.
jasu pāvana rāvana nāga mahā. khaganātha jathā kari kōpa gahā. 4.

Your divine body is an embodiment or a concentrated form of incomparable beauty possessed by countless Kamdeos (cupids; the patron god of this quality).

Verily, the Siddhas (mystics and those who have superhuman powers and knowledge), the most exalted amongst the sages, hermits and ascetics as well as learned poets and bards laud your glories and sing praised about your divine virtues. (3)

Forsooth, your glory and fame are true and holy, and they purify all who sing and hear them. You had caught the ferocious serpent symbolised by the demon king

Ravana as easily as Garud (the legendary vehicle of Lord Vishnu and an Eagle) when the latter becomes angry¹. (4)

[¹The Garud is known to be an enemy of serpents, and he can swoop down from the sky to gobble them. In this verse, Lord Ram is compared to Garud, and the cruel demon king Ravana to the serpents because like the latter Ravana was also feared by the whole world. In the story of the Ramayana, Lord Ram had killed him on the request of the Gods and Earth.]

जन रंजन भंजन सोक भयं । गतक्रोध सदा प्रभु बोधमयं ॥ ५ ॥
अवतार उदार अपार गुणं । महि भार बिभंजन ग्यानघनं ॥ ६ ॥

jana ranjana bhanjana sōka bhayaṁ. gatakrōdha sadā prabhu bōdhamayaṁ. 5.

avatāra udāra apāra guṇaṁ. mahi bhāra bibhanjana gyānaghanam. 6.

Oh Lord (prabhu)! You charm your devotees and grant them delight and bliss; you destroy and dispel sorrows, grief and affright of all kinds. You are never angry, and are a personified form of knowledge about the Truth and Reality, about pure Consciousness. [That is, you are self-realised and enlightened, and when one has attained this transcendental spiritual state of existence, he never becomes angry. No vices, let alone anger, would affect such a realised soul.] (5)

Your incarnation (as Lord Ram) is highly exalted and honourable, and it possesses the noblest and the most excellent of virtues and characters. Indeed, you have revealed yourself to remove the burden of the earth, and you are a veritable treasury where all forms of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment have been concentrated. (6)

अज व्यापकमेकमनादि सदा । करुणाकर राम नमामि मुदा ॥ ७ ॥
रघुवंस बिभूषण दूषण हा । कृत भूप बिभीषण दीन रहा ॥ ८ ॥

aja byāpakamēkamanādi sadā. karunākara rāma namāmi mudā. 7.

raghubansa bibhūṣana dūṣana hā. kṛta bhūpa bibhīṣana dīna rahā. 8.

[But inspite of the fact that you have assumed a physical form of a human prince, you nevertheless, in your essential and truthful form, possess the following virtues—]

You are always (sadā) ever-present and unborn (aja). You are all-pervading and all-encompassing (byāpaka). You are non-dual and only one (though you exist in two apparent forms, one as the ‘Nirguna’ or formless and invisible almighty Lord of creation, and the other as the ‘Saguna’ or the manifested form with its inherent limitations like the present form as Lord Ram; “mēkam”). You are without an end or beginning (anādi).

Oh Lord Ram who is a treasury and a mine of compassion, mercy and kindness! I bow before you with great delight, and do so most cheerfully, exuberantly and heartily. (7)

Oh Lord who is like an ornament (i.e. most exalted and outstanding member) of the family of king Raghu (of Ayodhya)! Oh Lord who had slayed the demon

named Dushan¹, and who eliminates or eradicates all the faults and shortcomings (of your devotees)! It is well established that Vibhishan was no more than a destitute, most humble and desolate, one who was deserted by even his family and race²—verily, you had by your graceful nature made him the king of Lanka. (8)

[¹The story of the slaying of demons Khar and Dushan is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Doha no. 20.

²Vibhishan was the younger brother of the demon king Ravana of Lanka. He was kicked and insulted by Ravana when he tried to make his elder brother see reason and avoid a war that was sure be ruinous for him. Vibhishan then left Lanka and took shelter with Lord Ram who not only welcomed him but also anointed him the future king of Lanka when the war ended. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 50.]

गुन ग्यान निधान अमान अजं । नित राम नमामि बिभुं बिरजं ॥ ९ ॥
भुजदंड प्रचंड प्रताप बलं । खल बृंद निकंद महा कुसलं ॥ १० ॥

guna gyāna nidhāna amāna ajam. nita rāma namāmi bibhum birajam. 9.
bhujadaṇḍa pracaṇḍa pratāpa balaṁ. khala bṛnda nikanda mahā kusalam. 10.

Oh a treasury of excellent Gunas (qualities, virtues) and Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment about the Truth) (guna gyāna nidhāna)! Oh Lord who has no trace of pride and ego (amāna)! Oh the one who is eternal and without a birth (ajam)! Oh Lord who is honoured by the epithet of ‘Vibho’ (bibhum; i.e. one who is all-pervading, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient). And Oh Lord who is acclaimed as the one who is free from the snare of faults associated with Maya (delusions and falsehoods; “birajam”)! I regularly and most reverentially bow before your Divine Self. (9)

Verily, your arms are reputed to have stupendous powers and terrible (i.e. huge and immeasurable) strength (that make you invincible). In all sooth, you are an expert and are very deft in destroying huge contingents of those who are wicked, evil and vile. (10)

बिनु कारन दीन दयाल हितं । छबि धाम नमामि रमा सहितं ॥ ११ ॥
भव तारन कारन काज परं । मन संभव दारुन दोष हरं ॥ १२ ॥

binu kārana dīna dayāla hitam. chabi dhāma namāmi ramā sahitaṁ. 11.
bhava tārana kārana kāja param. mana sambhava dārūna dōṣa haraṁ. 12.

You are friendly and compassionate towards those who are meek, poor, downtrodden and humble, and look after their welfare and good without any ostensible reason (as a matter of habit, for you love all those who have no other source to get help, succour and solace).

I bow most reverentially before you along with Rama (the divine consort of Lord Vishnu, i.e. goddess Laxmi)¹. Indeed, you are a treasury of stupendous beauty. (11)

Lord, you are the one who helps a creature to cross over this measureless and horrifying ocean representing the cycle of birth and death (i.e. of transmigration).

You are supreme and transcend (*param* = i.e. are beyond the parameters or the reach; not affected or influenced by) the law that covers the rest of this creation, i.e. the world that is governed by the law of 'cause and effect' (*kāraṇa kāja*). Verily, you can remove or purge all the taints that would tarnish the creature due the countless evil desires and sinful tendencies that sprout from the creature's *Mana* (heart and mind)². (12)

[¹It is clear here that when the creator Brahma is praying to Lord Ram with Sita by his side, he is not praying or paying his homage to the 'son of Dasrath and the king of Ayodhya who has been victorious in the war at Lanka', but to Lord Vishnu who had taken a human form as Lord Ram, with Laxmi accompanying the Lord as his human wife Sita, so that the task of the Gods and Earth, which was to get rid of the evil forces represented by the demons led by their king Ravana of Lanka that had been tyrannising them relentlessly, could be successfully done.

²A living being would act and do something only when his *Mana* motivates or inspires him to act or do it. For instance, when one feels hungry, his mind tells him to look for food, even steal it if it is not to be found honestly. If one sees something beautiful, his heart longs for it, and this longing urges him to go get it. This is a simple and plain example of the working of the 'cause and effect' theory. But it is not that simple and innocent in the backdrop of the complexities of the gross world of material sense objects where the temptations and allurements are endless and one better than the other, luring the creature in a vicious trap from which he finds virtually impossible to get out if once he gets in. Resources are limited, giving rise to competition, which in its turn brings jealousy, malice, ill-will and antagonism, as well as strife and loss of peace. A creature becomes so deluded that he does not realise the whirlpool in which he has landed.

In this scenario, devotees of Lord Ram are helped by the Lord, by the dint of their devotion for the Lord, to develop a pious and pure heart that motivates them to turn away from the grossness of the world around them and move on the path of righteousness and auspiciousness. They do not yearn for the world, which at once eliminates a lot many causes of the actions that a creature usually takes giving rise to hordes of problems for his spiritual well-being.

According to the law of Karma from the metaphysical perspective, every action has its origin in a cause. The 'cause' is known as 'Prakriti' or 'Nature', and the 'effect or action' is known as the 'Creation'. In other words, this huge, indescribable and variable 'creation' has its origin in 'Prakriti'. From our ordinary level of understanding we can visualise also when we realise that the same human race, born in the same process and having the same physical features and organs of the body, both external and internal, a body that functions in the same way, look and perceive and understand the world in different ways, with one person's understanding and take on the world and its circumstances being quite dissimilar to the other person's views of the same world with the same qualities.]

सर चाप मनोहर त्रोन धरं । जलजारुन लोचन भूपबरं ॥ १३ ॥

सुख मंदिर सुंदर श्रीरमनं । मद मार मुधा ममता समनं ॥ १४ ॥

sara cāpa manōhara trōna dharam. jalajārūna lōcana bhūpabaram. 13.
sukha mandira sundara śrīramanam. mada māra mudhā mamatā samanam. 14.

You (Lord Ram) are armed with a magnificent bow and an arrow (that you hold in your hands), as well as a quiver (that you tie around your waist). Your eyes have a reddish or pinkish hue like that of a red-lotus flower.

You are the best amongst all the kings of the earth (bhūpabaram). (13)

You are indeed a home to all joys, happiness and delight; you are beautiful and charming; and you are the divine consort of 'Sri' (i.e. goddess Laxmi, the patron deity of prosperity, wealth, success and well-being in this world).

You are the one who destroys such evils as 'Mada' (pride, arrogance and haughtiness), 'Māra' (which is another word for 'Kaam' or worldly lust, passion and yearnings), and 'Mudhā Mamtā' or false sense of affection, possessiveness, and longing and belonging to this world. (14)

अनवद्य अखंड न गोचर गो । सबरूप सदा सब होइ न गो ॥ १५ ॥

इति बेद बदंति न दंतकथा । रबि आतप भिन्नमभिन्न जथा ॥ १६ ॥

anavadya akhaṇḍa na gōcara gō. sabarūpa sadā saba hō'i na gō. 15.
iti bēda badanti na dantakathā. rabi ātapa bhinnamabhinna jathā. 16.

You (Lord Ram) are free from all faults and are beyond reproach (anavadya). You are indivisible and non-dual, steady and eternal (unlike the rest of the creation) (akhaṇḍa).

You are beyond the purview of perception of the gross organs of perception of the creature's body (na gōcara gō). [To wit, what we see as the person known as 'Lord Ram' is not your true identity, for it is so sublime and subtle that the mind and the senses cannot see it. It is because your real form is 'pure consciousness' that is invisible, and has a transcendental and all-pervading existence.]

Though it is true that whatever that exists in this creation is actually your all-pervading cosmic form manifested in all those individual as well as collective forms, but at the same time it is also true that none of them can ever be called your true form¹--- (15)

---in all sooth and without gainsay, this is what the Vedas affirm (iti bēda badanti), and therefore it is not something based on mere conjecture, traditional beliefs, wild theorizing or heresy (na dantakathā).

It is just like the case of the sun shining in the sky: for the 'sun' and its 'rays' are independent of each other but so closely interrelated that they exist simultaneously and cannot be separated from one another². In a similar way, you (the Supreme Being represented by the cosmic Consciousness) and this world (the creation that was revealed in the light of this Consciousness) are interchangeable as well as independent of each other. (16)

[¹The world or creation is gross, it is always changing; it has an origin and an end; it grows and perishes. But you are subtle and sublime; you remain constant and

steady as you are the eternal and imperishable cosmic Consciousness. You live in this world as its essence and reality, but not at the gross level of its existence. Therefore, though this world is said to be revealed from you, it is certainly not 'you'. You transcend it; you go much beyond it.

An instance would explain. We all know that water is made of atoms of Hydrogen and Oxygen (H₂O). Water takes many physical forms—viz. steam, vapour, cloud, moisture, liquid, solid such as the ice in the household fridge or the glacier that cover huge tracts of land, and so on. Then its existence is affected by a wide range of circumstances—it is mixed with other fluids, many different chemicals and additives are added to it in varying proportions, it flows in a variety of ways such as rivers, streams, oceans, seas etc. But does this mean that the primary elements in it, i.e. the atoms of Hydrogen and Oxygen, undergo any change; does it mean that water truly represents the characteristic qualities of either of these two elements? Sure, the answer is an emphatic 'No'.

Similarly, the cosmic Consciousness remains the basic ingredient on life in this creation, but the latter is not the former, and neither is the former the latter.]

²If there is the sun in the sky then it would inevitably produce light in the form of its rays. It cannot be otherwise; it cannot be that the sun and darkness go together. Whatever is within the realm of the sun would get its light, and would be visible to the world.

If one sees the rays of the sunlight, he takes it for granted that there must be a sun shining in the sky. If one sees the sun in the sky then it cannot be denied that there is light in the world, and this light has its origin in the sun. As the sun moves across the sky, its light follows it; when the sun sets in the western sky, the rays too disappear. It is not possible to have the rays of the sun without the presence of the latter. These two, the 'sun' and its 'rays', cannot be segregated from one another.

Likewise, Brahm or cosmic Consciousness, here symbolised by the sun, makes the creation apparent, or makes it possible for the creature to see it, to understand it in clear physical terms that are approachable, describable and comprehensible. This revelation or appearance of the world in the background of cosmic darkness is possible only in the light of knowledge provided by the consciousness, which is like the sun providing the world with its light through its rays.

The sun exists even beyond the horizon, but since its rays are not here around us, we are not able to see our immediate surroundings; we would be groping in the darkness. Similarly, if we do not have wisdom and true knowledge that comes with realisation of the pure consciousness, we would be groping in the darkness of ignorance regarding the true nature of this creation.]

कृतकृत्य बिभो सब बानर ए । निरखंति तवानन सादर ए ॥ १७ ॥

धिग जीवन देव सरीर हरे । तव भक्ति बिना भव भूलि परे ॥ १८ ॥

kṛtakṛtya bibhō saba bānara ē. nirakhanti tavānana sādara ē. 17.

dhiga jīvana dēva sarīra harē. tava bhakti binā bhava bhūli parē. 18.

Oh Bibho (i.e. the all-pervading, almighty and supreme Lord, Sri Ram)! These monkeys (who fought alongside you in the war) are truly blessed and most fortunate as they watch your divine face reverentially this moment. [They are also blessed and

fortunate as they enjoyed the rare privilege of being so close to you and keep your company, have served you selflessly, and have obtained your blessings.] (17)

Oh Hari (one of the many names of Lord Vishnu)! Shame is upon us (the Gods) who though have immortal life and a form that is divine but are still devoid of your devotion and remain engrossed in the affairs of the world¹. (18)

[¹The Gods have specific duties to perform in this world. They are like the magistrates, knights and commanders appointed by an Emperor to look after different aspects of administration and other affairs of the empire. Though they are powerful in themselves, they cannot surpass the Emperor. They also are not as close to him as the ordinary servant of his palace. If the Emperor's attendant, who is very diligent in serving his Lord, falls sick, the Emperor is more worried and concerned than when the brave knight takes to some illness—for the Emperor's daily needs and wants are well known and well attended to by this particular servant than it is done even by the battery of other servants in the household, and the Emperor has unconsciously begin to favour him, while the duties of the far-off knight can be carried by someone else during his sickness; the Emperor is not directly affected in the latter case.

These commanders, knights and magistrates have some gain to be had by serving the Emperor, such as the privileges that come with the powers that are bestowed upon them. But this poor and illiterate servant serves his Master without any powers and privileges that the commanders and magistrates enjoy. So the servant's service is selfless and without much of an expectations. He cannot hope to become a minister of the kingdom or the empire, or get some high honour and decoration like the knights and the commanders just because he is the Emperor's diligent servant, for he knows his limitations.

The monkeys served Lord Ram without any selfish motives, for all of them were exceedingly humble and ordinary creatures. But the Lord blessed them like the shower of rain: he lived with them, he shared a part of his life with them, he sat with them, ate with them, slept with them, fought hand-in-hand with them. And why did the monkeys fight actually? They fought so that Lord Ram could kill the demons and free the Gods and the Earth of their tormentors. And in the process, the poor monkeys had to endure a lot of sufferings and make a great lot of sacrifices: suffered hardships of leaving their homes in Kishkindha and traveling so far from home, then crossing the mighty ocean to fight in an alien land with a ferocious enemy where each one of them must have been injured in the ensuing war. This again was a selfless service done for the sake of peace and security in this world.

And who would benefit from their sacrifices: the Gods! It should be kept in mind that all this while when the war raged on the ground at Lanka, the Gods only stood in the sky to watch the proceedings on the battle-field! The creator Brahma realised this irony and felt morally guilty when he made the statement here that “the monkeys were really blessed, whereas the Gods should be ashamed of themselves”.]

अब दीनदयाल दया करिऐ । मति मोरि बिभेदकरी हरिऐ ॥ १९ ॥

जेहि ते बिपरीत क्रिया करिऐ । दुख सो सुख मानि सुखी चरिऐ ॥ २० ॥

aba dīnadayāla dayā kari'ai. mati mōri bibhēdakarī hari'ai. 19.

jēhi tē biparīta kriyā kari'ai. dukha sō sukha māni sukhī cari'ai. 20.

Oh the Lord who is merciful and compassionate towards the humble, the meek and the poor! Be kind and gracious upon me by removing the delusions of my intellect (that propels me to distinguish this creation from you, that makes me think that I am the 'creator of the world', and that there is some sort of duality in the form of your Saguna and Nirguna forms). [Let me realise that everything, including my own self, is nothing but you in that form, is nothing but pure consciousness.] (19)

Verily, it is due to this sense of confusion created by delusions that I keep committing errors, and feel merry at things which are only providers of grief and sorrows. [Here, Brahma refers to his job of creating, and acting as the old and wise patriarch of creation to whom all the Gods go for guidance. Brahma is so engrossed in the affairs of the world that inspite of knowing that it would perish, he goes on producing newer forms of creatures. Instead of advising the Gods to do meditation and seek eternal beatitude, he keeps them engaged in the myriad affairs of the world, making them believe that they are Superior Beings, i.e. the 'Gods'. According to the Purans, the heaven where the Gods live is almost like our mortal world with its own hierarchy, mutual jealousy among its inhabitants, one-upmanships and bickerings. They too have enemies such as the demons. They too need food for survival, which is provided by the humans by offerings they make to the Gods during fire sacrifices and by other means.]

खल खंडन मंडन रञ्ज छमा । पद पंकज सेवित संभु उमा ॥ २१ ॥

नृप नायक दे बरदानमिदं । चरनांबुज प्रेम सदा सुभदं ॥ २२ ॥

khala khaṇḍana maṇḍana ramya chamā. pada paṅkaja sēvita sambhu umā.
21.

nṛpa nāyaka dē baradānamidaṁ. caranāmbuja prēma sadā subhadaṁ. 22.

Oh Lord, you are the one who destroy those who are wicked and evil. [That is, you intervene to get rid of the negative elements in this creation when they try to upturn the cart of goodness and righteousness under they onslaught.]

You are a decorative ornament of the earth. [That is, the earth is proud of you; it is because of you that the earth has got its glory and worthiness. You adorn it just like an ornament adorns the wearer and make the latter look attractive. Had it not been for your munificence and grace, the earth would have been an inhospitable planet like the rest in the solar system!]

Your holy feet are being served by Lord Mahesh (Shiva) and his divine consort Parvati. (21)

Oh the Leader of Kings (nṛpa nāyaka)! Please bless me with the boon that I may cherish an everlasting devotion and affection for your lotus like holy feet which are a perennial source of auspiciousness, blessedness and beatitude. (22)

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(3.6) Lord Ram's Hymn by Indra (the King of Gods)

Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line nos. 1—20 that precede Doha no. 113:

छं०. जय राम सोभा धाम । दायक प्रनत बिश्राम ॥ १ ॥

धृत त्रोन बर सर चाप । भुजदंड प्रबल प्रताप ॥ २ ॥

chanda.

jaya rāma sōbhā dhāma. dāyaka pranata biśrāma. 1.

dhṛta trōna bara sara cāpa. bhujaḍaṇḍa prabala pratāpa. 2.

‘Oh Lord Ram who is an embodiment of astounding beauty and character (sōbhā dhāma)! You give peace, rest, succour and solace to those who seek refuge with you and take your shelter (i.e. who are tormented by the world and come to surrender themselves before you, praying you to save them, to protect and help them). (1)

You bear an excellent quiver, and hold a bow and arrow in your hands. I bow most reverentially to the Lord whose might and strength of arms are legendary and world famed. (2)

जय दूषनारि खरारि । मर्दन निसाचर धारि ॥ ३ ॥

यह दुष्ट मारेउ नाथ । भए देव सकल सनाथ ॥ ४ ॥

jaya dūṣanāri kharāri. mardana nisācara dhāri. 3.

yaha duṣṭa mārē'u nātha. bha'ē dēva sakala sanātha. 4.

Glory to you oh Lord (Sri Ram) who is an enemy of the demons Khar and Dushan, and who has vanquished the fierce army of the demons¹. (3)

Oh Lord! You have slayed this evil, wretched and wicked demon (i.e. the demon king Ravana), and this has made the Gods fearless and feel secure². (4)

[¹The demons Khar and Dushan along with their army were slayed by Lord Ram earlier as described in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 18—to Doha no. 20.

²The sight where this prayer was said by Indra was the battle-field of Lanka, and the time was when the Lord had slayed the fierce demons and their king Ravana. Hence, the words “yaha duṣṭa mārē'u” refers to the king of Lanka and of the demon race, i.e. Ravana.]

जय हरन धरनी भार । महिमा उदार अपार ॥ ५ ॥

जय रावनारि कृपाल । किए जातुधान बिहाल ॥ ६ ॥

jaya harana dharanī bhāra. mahimā udāra apāra. 5.
jaya rāvanāri krpāla. ki'ē jātudhāna bihāla. 6.

Glory to the Lord (Sri Ram) who has eliminated the burden of the Earth (by getting rid of the cruel demons led by their king Ravana).

Oh Lord, your glories, munificence and benevolence are not only excellent, wonderful and stupendous but are also wondrous and so immense and profound that no one can fathom or count them (what to talk of describing them). (5)

Glory to the merciful and compassionate (krpāla) Lord who is an enemy of the demon king Ravana¹. You have reduced all the wicked demons to complete plight². (6)

[¹Lord Ram is called krpāla because he suffered hardships to kill the demons and their leader Ravana so that the rest of the world can live in peace. The Lord is at once a friend of all, including the demons as is evident when he accepted Ravana's own brother Vibhishan and made him a part of his group of advisors, and later on anointed him as the king of Lanka. The Lord does not have any personal animosity or ill-will against anyone, be he a demon by birth or anyone else. But he does not tolerate those who use their powers to make others suffer, and become so arrogant and haughty that they wouldn't listen to any wise counsel but continue to make others suffer in spite of warnings. In this case, Ravana represented all the demonic and evil forces in this creation that torment and tyrannise all its creatures, endlessly and without cause. So, being the Supreme Lord of this world, it was the Lord's moral duty to subdue him and get rid of him so that the rest of the world can live in peace.

²When it is said that the Lord had reduced the demons to plight, it refers to the demons who were blood-thirsty, cruel and wicked. It does not refer to the good demons like Vibhishan (Ravana's brother), or Malyawant (Ravana's maternal uncle), or Marich (who was forced by Ravana to become the golden deer so that Sita could be stolen), or Mandodari (Ravana's wife), or Trijata (the demoness who had guarded Sita during captivity), or Singhika (who guarded the gates of Lanka and was humbled by Hanuman when he had entered the city in search of Sita)—for all of them personally, and other demons who aligned themselves with these noble demons, had formed a group that were not killed in the war. These demons may have had the physical body of the demon race, but their characters and heart were not like what one would mean and understand with the word 'demon', for they were noble at heart and had a pious soul.

It ought to be remembered here that after the war ended, it is not that Lanka was completely de-populated. There remained in it those demons who had not sided with Ravana, and when, after the war, Lord Ram had made Vibhishan the king of Lanka and of the future generation of the demon race, these survivors of the war, the good demons, thrived and re-populated the place.]

लंकेस अति बल गर्ब । किए बस्य सुर गंधर्ब ॥ ७ ॥

मुनि सिद्ध नर खग नाग । हठि पंथ सब के लाग ॥ ८ ॥

laṅkēsa ati bala garba. ki'ē basya sura gandharba. 7.
muni sid'dha nara khaga nāga. haṭhi pantha saba kēm lāga. 8.

Ravana, the demon king of Lanka, was exceedingly and outrageously proud of his strength, powers and invincibility. He had subdued and ridden rough-shod over all the Gods and the Gandharvas (demi-gods). (7)

Nay, not only this, he was audacious enough to determinedly and relentlessly, without any sense of guilt or apprehension, pursue all other living beings in this creation in his dogged desire to subdue all, sparing none, and to bring the entire creation to its knees before him. so he had persecuted the exalted sages, the mystics and hermits as well as the ordinary human beings; he did not spare either the humble members of the animal race, right from the birds (who lived in the sky) to the reptiles (who lived a most humble and lowly life by being stuck to the surface of the earth)¹. (8)

[¹To wit, Ravana had become so haughty and arrogant of his powers and might that he wished to rule over the entire creation like a despotic tyrant, like a tyrannical and maniacal Emperor. He had started cruelly persecuting all living beings: in the heaven he subdued the powerful Gods and the Gandharvas, on the earth he started tormenting ordinary human beings as well as those who were exalted such as sages and mystics. Perhaps he may have feared from them—from the Gods due to their special strength and powers, and the humans, specially the sages and mystics because they had great mystical powers, but he had become so diabolical that he did not spare even the animals that couldn't possibly harm him by any stretch of imagination after he had conquered the Gods and the humans, for he started tormenting all the members of the animal race too, right from those who could reach high in the sky like the birds to those who were confined to the lower levels of the earth, such as the reptiles.

So it was necessary and a moral duty for the Lord to bring him to justice, for which Lord Vishnu had come down to earth in the form of Lord Ram to put things in order.]

परद्रोह रत अति दुष्ट । पायो सो फलु पापिष्ठ ॥ ९ ॥

अब सुनहु दीन दयाल । राजीव नयन बिसाल ॥ १० ॥

paradrōha rata ati duṣṭa. pāyō sō phalu pāpiṣṭa. 9.
aba sunahu dīna dayāla. rājīva nayana bisāla. 10.

He (Ravana) was ever-indulgent in animosity with the rest of the creation, and derived delight in afflicting suffering and plight upon others. Indeed he was most vile, wicked and evil (and it would not be wrong to say that he personified these vices).

Verily, he got what he deserved; this sinful fellow got the punishment for all his sins and wickedness. (9)

Now listen, Oh Lord who is ever so merciful and beneficent upon the poor, the meek and the humble, and who has lovely broad eyes that resemble an open lotus flower. (10) ---

मोहि रहा अति अभिमान । नहिं कोउ मोहि समान ॥ ११ ॥

अब देखि प्रभु पद कंज । गत मान प्रद दुख पुंज ॥ १२ ॥

mōhi rahā ati abhimāna. nahim kō'u mōhi samāna. 11.
aba dēkhi prabhu pada kanja. gata māna prada dukha punja. 12.

--- I (Indra) was very proud that there is no one comparable to me (in powers, strength, abilities, majesty etc., but all that came to a naught in front of Ravana whom you have vanquished, for I was completely impotent against him and had failed miserably to either protect my own dignity as well as the safety of the Gods of whom I am supposed to be a protector as I am their heavenly king!). (11)

But now Oh Lord, when I have had the Darshan (holy viewing) of your holy lotus-like feet, this worthless pride that I had, a pride that is the breeding ground of all sorrows, miseries and grief, has been dispelled¹. (12)

[¹Indra is the 'king' of Gods, and true to his ilk, he thought that no one is greater than him. But he had to bite the dust before Ravana. Now that Lord Ram slayed the powerful demon, Indra realised who was stronger, he or Lord Ram. This punctured the balloon of his pride!

The spiritual and metaphysical principle affirmed here is that 'pride, ego, haughtiness and arrogance', collectively called "abhimāna" or "māna", are the cause of many a problems faced by the creature in his life. By overcoming this one negative trait, many sufferings can be easily avoided.]

कोउ ब्रह्म निर्गुन ध्याव । अव्यक्त जेहि श्रुति गाव ॥ १३ ॥
मोहि भाव कोसल भूप । श्रीराम सगुन सरूप ॥ १४ ॥

kō'u brahma nirguna dhyāva. abyakta jēhi śruti gāva. 13.
mōhi bhāva kōsala bhūpa. śrīrāma saguna sarūpa. 14.

Some prefer to worship and meditate upon the 'Nirguna' (the all-pervading, attribute-less, invisible and cosmic) form or aspect of Brahm (the Supreme Being) who has been described by the Vedas as being 'Avyakta'—one who is not manifested or visible; one who cannot be perceived and described as he has no specific attributes, and also because he is most sublime and subtle. (13)

But Oh Lord Ram, as for me, I love to adore this visible form of yours, known as your 'Saguna' form as the King of Kaushal. [The word 'Saguna' is the opposite of 'Nirguna', and it refers to the Supreme Being's visible form during one of his manifestations.] (14)

बैदेहि अनुज समेत । मम हृदयँ करहु निकेत ॥ १५ ॥
मोहि जानिए निज दास । दे भक्ति रमानिवास ॥ १६ ॥

baidēhi anuja samēta. mama hṛdayam² karahu nikēta. 15.
mōhi jāni'ai nija dāsa. dē bhakti ramānivāsa. 16.

Oh Lord! Please make my heart an eternal and divine abode for your own self along with Vaidehi (Sita, the Lord's consort) and your younger brother (Laxman). (15)

Oh Lord Ramānivāsa (i.e. the Lord who lives in the heart of goddess Laxmi)! Regard me as your devotee and humble follower, and bless me with (the fruit of) your devotion. (16)

छं०. दे भक्ति रमानिवास त्रास हरन सरन सुखदायकं ॥ १७ ॥

सुख धाम राम नमामि काम अनेक छबि रघुनायकं ॥ १८ ॥

chanda.

dē bhakti ramānivāsa trāsa harana sarana sukhadāyakaṁ. 17.

sukha dhāma rāma namāmi kāma anēka chabi raghunāyakaṁ. 18.

Oh Lord Ramānivāsa! Grant me your devotion. Oh Lord, you are the one who dispels all the fears of those who have taken shelter with you and sought refuge at your holy feet. You give delight to all of them by bestowing peace, joy and happiness upon them. (17)

Oh Lord Ram who is an abode of peace, joy, happiness and delight (sukha dhāma)!

I bow most reverentially before Lord Ram (rāma namāmi) who is the Lord of King Raghu's Race, and who embodies in himself the charm and the beauty of countless Kamdeos (cupids; the patron god of these qualities)! (18)

सुर बृंद रंजन द्वंद भंजन मनुज तनु अतुलितबलं ॥ १९ ॥

ब्रह्मादि संकर सेव्य राम नमामि करुना कोमलं ॥ २० ॥

sura bṛnda raṅjana dvanda bhaṅjana manuja tanu atulitabalaṁ. 19.

brahmādi saṅkara sēbya rāma namāmi karunā kōmalaṁ. 20.

Oh Lord who grants joy and happiness to all the Gods! You quell all the confusions and doubts that arise from opposite experiences or contrary situations in this creation ("dvanda bhaṅjana"; thereby giving peace and rest to the mind of the creature).

Oh Lord, you have assumed a human form (manuja tanu), and have incomparable strength, majesty and powers (atulitabalaṁ). (19)

You are being served and adored by even Brahma (the creator) and Lord Shiva (the concluder of creation). Oh Lord Ram who are tender due to your merciful and compassionate nature. I reverentially bow before you.' (20)

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(3.7) Lord Ram's Hymn by Lord Shiva
(the third God of the Trinity; the concluder of creation)

Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line nos. 1—9 that precede Doha no. 115:

छं०. मामभिरक्षय रघुकुल नायक । धृत बर चाप रुचिर कर सायक ॥ १ ॥
मोह महा घन पटल प्रभंजन । संसय बिपिन अनल सुर रंजन ॥ २ ॥

chanda.

māmabhirakṣaya raghukula nāyaka. dhr̥ta bara cāpa rucira kara sāyaka. 1.
mōha mahā ghana paṭala prabhañjana. sansaya bipina anala sura rañjana. 2.

‘Oh the Chief of the Raghu Race (Lord Ram)! Holding an excellent bow and a shining arrow in your hands, please give me your protection, please save me. (1)

For the sake of sweeping away huge banks of dark clouds representing the greatest of ‘Moha’ (delusions; worldly attachments and temptations), you are veritably like a very strong force of wind.

Similarly, for the sake of destroying and reducing to ashes a dense and wild forest representing ‘Sansaya’ (uncertainties, dilemmas), you are truly like a wild fire (before which no forest can survive).

In all sooth and without gainsay, oh Lord, you are the one who grants joy and delight to all the Gods at once. (2)

अगुन सगुन गुन मंदिर सुंदर । भ्रम तम प्रबल प्रताप दिवाकर ॥ ३ ॥
काम क्रोध मद गज पंचानन । बसहु निरंतर जन मन कानन ॥ ४ ॥

aguna saguna guna mandira sundara. bhrama tama prabala pratāpa divākara. 3.

kāma krōdha mada gaja pañcānana. basahu nirantara jana mana kānana. 4.

You (Lord Ram) are both ‘Saguna’ as well as ‘Nirguna’. [That is, you have a transcendental, all-pervading, all-encompassing, omnipresent, most sublime and subtle existence as the Supreme Lord of creation and the cosmic Consciousness. As such, you exist both in the visible and the invisible form; you have no specific form with characteristic attributes because you are invisible, subtle and sublime, but at the same time when you reveal yourself in a visible form you assume them.]

You are an abode of (or an embodiment of) all the excellent and beautiful virtues, and hence you are beauty personified.

For the purpose of eliminating the darkness (tama; uncertainties and consternations) represented by ‘Bhrama’ (having doubts and confusions arising out of

ignorance, lack of true knowledge, and caused by delusions), you are like the glorious sun with its astounding brilliance (and powers to counter darkness effectively and effortlessly by its mere presence). (3)

Similarly, for the purpose of vanquishing powerful, strong and robust elephants symbolised by such vices as 'Kaam' (lust and passion), 'Krodh' (anger, wrathfulness) and 'Mada' (ego, arrogance, haughtiness), you are like a lion. Therefore oh gracious Lord, please be kind to live perpetually in the forest represented by the Mana (mind and heart) of this devotee and servant of yours.

[The lion is so skilled that it can easily kill an elephant which is many times stronger, more muscular and bigger in size as compared to the former. Likewise, though these evil tendencies in a creature are very strong in themselves, but they don't stand a chance when Lord Ram decides to remove them and stop them from tormenting his devotees. The negative qualities listed here have their seat in a person's heart and mind. Hence, Lord Shiva requests Lord Ram to live in his Mana so that he is always free from the fear of Kaam, Krodh and Mada.] (4)

बिषय मनोरथ पुंज कंज बन । प्रबल तुषार उदार पार मन ॥ ५ ॥
भव बारिधि मंदर परमं दर । बारय तारय संसृति दुस्तर ॥ ६ ॥

biṣaya manōratha puñja kañja bana. prabala tuṣāra udāra pāra mana. 5.
bhava bāridhi mandara paramaṁ dara. bāraya tāraya sansṛti dustara. 6.

For the purpose of destroying a thick cluster of lotus flowers representing desires for sensual pleasures and the sense objects of comforts and pleasure in the material world, you are like the deep frost. [The frost is an enemy of the lotus. No matter how fine a garden may be of lotus flowers, but once there is frost the entire garden is ruined as all the lotuses die.]

Oh Lord, you are very magnanimous, gracious, broad-hearted and liberal in your temperament, by your natural habit.

Verily, you have a transcendental existence that is beyond the reach and purview of the Mana (mind and heart); you cannot be comprehended or reached by the Mana. (5)

For the sake of churning (or crossing over or overcoming the resistance) of the ocean like world of birth and death (the world of transmigration with its attendant sufferings and horrors), you are veritably like the great Mandrachal Mountain. [This mountain was used by the Gods and the Demons as a churning rod when they had churned the ancient ocean in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternity and bliss. Here it implies that if one wishes to attain this Amrit, one should seek the blessings and help of Lord Ram.]

Oh Lord! Please dispel our gravest of fears and consternations, and take us across the formidable and most terrible ocean represented by this world (of transmigration, of countless sorrows and fears, of insurmountable spiritual problems and moral hurdles, of irresistible temptations and sensual desires, of greed, malice, jealousy, hatred and selfishness, and so on and so forth, that all act like churning whirlpools and fierce crocodiles and ferocious sharks, ever ready to pounce upon us at the first chance, and from which it is well-nigh impossible for us to free ourselves and get across on by relying merely on our own strength). (6)

स्याम गात राजीव बिलोचन । दीन बंधु प्रनतारति मोचन ॥ ७ ॥
 अनुज जानकी सहित निरंतर । बसहु राम नृप मम उर अंतर ॥ ८ ॥

syāma gāta rājīva bilōcana. dīna bandhu pranatārati mōcana. 7.
 anuja jānakī sahita nirantara. basahu rāma nrpa mama ura antara. 8.

Oh Lord who has a dark-complexioned body (syāma gāta), and large, lotus-like eyes (rājīva bilōcana)! You are a friend of the poor, the meek and the humble (dīna bandhu). You remove the fear of all those who take shelter with you from all their sorrows and miseries (pranatārati mōcana).

Oh King Ram (rāma nrpa)! Please reside always in my heart along with your younger brother (Laxman) and your divine consort Jānakī (Sita). (8)

मुनि रंजन महि मंडल मंडन । तुलसिदास प्रभु त्रास बिखंडन ॥ ९ ॥

muni ranjana mahi maṇḍala maṇḍana. tulasidāsa prabhu trāsa bikhaṇḍana. 9.

Oh Lord! You give joy, happiness and delight to the exalted sages and hermits.

You are an ornament of the entire earth. [Just like the case of a person's body being decorated by the jewels he or she wears, the earth is all the more fortunate that you had chosen to take a birth here and live on it, walk on its surface, perform so many deeds, and spread the message of Dharma propounded by the scriptures by setting the practical standards regarding the principles of righteousness, auspiciousness, nobility, ethics, probity and propriety by your own example and life. The earth has become all the more worthy, beautiful and glorious place to live because you decided to visit it, for otherwise, it would have been one of the so many other planets in the solar system on the one hand, and on the other hand it would be a place full of vices and sins, and dominated by demonic forces as the case was earlier when the demons, led by Ravana, had ruled over it.]

You are the dear Lord of Tulsidas (tulasidāsa prabhu)¹, and the one who ruptures, destroys and reduces to pulp all sorts of fears and torments (trāsa bikhaṇḍana).'

[¹The phrase "tulasidāsa prabhu" used here can have two applications that would change the meaning of this last stanza. One is in the way as done herein above. The other would be as follows: "Tulsidas says that the Lord is the one who removes all the fears and consternations." In this latter case, the last part of the hymn would be an observation made by Tulsidas instead of being a part of the prayer of Lord Shiva. It means that Tulsidas added his own comments here while narrating Shiva's prayer in his book 'Ram Charit Manas'.] (9)

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(3.8) Lord Ram's Hymn by the Vedas
(personified form of the most ancient and primary scriptures)

Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 1—24 that precede Doha no. 13.

छं०. जय सगुन निर्गुन रूप रूप अनूप भूप सिरोमने । १ ।
दसकंधरादि प्रचंड निसिचर प्रबल खल भुज बल हने ॥ २ ॥
अवतार नर संसार भार बिभंजि दारुन दुख दहे । ३ ।
जय प्रनतपाल दयाल प्रभु संजुक्त सक्ति नमामहे ॥ ४ ॥

chanda.

jaya saguna nirguna rūpa rūpa anūpa bhūpa sirōmanē. 1.
dasakandharādi pracaṇḍa nisicara prabala khala bhuja bala hanē. 2.
avatāra nara sansāra bhāra bibhanji dārūna dukha dahē. 3.
jaya pranatapāla dayāla prabhu saṅjukta sakti namāmahē. 4.

‘Glory and Hail to the Lord (Sri Ram) who has both a ‘Saguna’ and a ‘Nirguna’ form¹. [That is, the Lord has a transcendental form that has both the characters of the cosmic Consciousness that has no particular form as it is all-pervading and all-encompassing, as well as of the Supreme Being who has taken a human form with specific characters and virtues.]

You have a form that is matchlessly beautiful and bewitchingly charming.

Oh Lord, you are the King of kings, and the most exalted amongst them. (1)

You have slayed, with the strength of your arms, Ravana and other demons who were most formidable, extremely terrible, very powerful and strong, and highly wicked and evil. (2)

Verily, oh Lord, you have manifested in the form of a human being to remove or eliminate the burden of the world (represented by these demons and the diabolical horrors they have been perpetrating for ages), and have literally reduced to ashes the hordes of sorrows and miseries that had been tormenting the world (due to the tyranny unleashed by these cruel demons). (3)

Glory to you! I (the personified form of the Vedas) most reverentially bow before you along with your divine Shakti (dynamic cosmic powers that are represented by Sita, your wife, who, by the virtue of her association with you, has made you an embodiment of these cosmic dynamic powers). (4)

[¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Chanda line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 115 in the prayer of Lord Shiva.]

तव बिषम माया बस सुरासुर नाग नर अग जग हरे । ५ ।
भव पंथ भ्रमत अमित दिवस निसि काल कर्म गुननि भरे ॥ ६ ॥

जे नाथ करि करुना बिलोके त्रिबिधि दुख ते निर्बहे । ७ ।
भव खेद छेदन दच्छ हम कहूँ रच्छ राम नमामहे ॥ ८ ॥

tava biṣama māyā basa surāsura nāga nara aga jaga harē. 5.
bhava pantha bhramata amita divasa nisi kāla karma gunani bharē. 6.
jē nātha kari karunā bilōkē tribidhi dukha tē nirbahē. 7.
bhava khēda chēdana daccha hama kahum^१ raccha rāma namāmahē. 8.

Oh Hari (literally ‘one who steals or dispels all sorrows and grief’; here meaning Lord Ram, and referring to Lord Vishnu as this word is one of his many divine names)! Under the spell of your formidable Maya (delusions) and overcome by its astounding strength and powers to subdue one and all, every entity in this creation, such as the gods, the demons, the naagas (lords of the subterranean world) and the human beings, nay, not only them but all the rest of those who are animate as well as those who are inanimate in this world, are ensnared by the factors of Kaal (time and death), Karma (deeds and their natural consequences that determine one’s destiny) and Gunas¹ (qualities that decide a person’s nature and temperament), and are driven by these drivers on the path that never seems to end, but keeps all the creatures trapped endlessly in the cycle of birth and death². (5-6)

[¹The Gunas are three in number, such as the Sata Guna, the Raja Guna and the Tama Guna. These are the basic qualities that every creature has in him. They determine his way of thinking and behaviour. An admixture of the three, along with the other two factors of Kaal and Karma or deeds that a creature does in his life determine his destiny. It is such a vicious cycle that it never stops or ends. This perpetually traps the creature in this world, and his soul never finds rest and peace.

²The reason for this is that Maya, or delusion, has cast its snare over the entire creation which prevents anyone from realising the predicament he is in. The result is that all the creatures remain engrossed and indulgent in this world without bothering for liberation and deliverance, or even being aware of the fact that one is miserable and his misery is self-inflicted. Surely, if one would be freed from Maya, he would be freed from all the troubles and mischief caused by Maya. And how can this be achieved? It is explained below—]

In all sooth oh Lord, out of these creatures (who are bonded to this world under the spell of Maya), those upon whom you become benevolent and graceful, those upon whom you cast your merciful eyes of compassion and kindness, are the ones who are blessed with the boon of freedom from all the types of sorrows and miseries caused by the three drivers mentioned here (i.e. Kaal, Karma and Gunas).

Oh Lord who is skilled in releasing one from the sufferings incumbent in the cycle of birth and death. Please grant us your protection; please save us³. We (the Vedas) reverentially bow before you. (7-8)

[³Here, the Vedas are praying on behalf of world which is tormented by countless miseries, and from which it finds difficult to free itself.]

जे ग्यान मान बिमत्त तव भव हरनि भक्ति न आदरी । ९ ।
ते पाइ सुर दुर्लभ पदादपि परत हम देखत हरी ॥ १० ॥
बिस्वास करि सब आस परिहरि दास तव जे होइ रहे । ११ ।

जपि नाम तव बिनु श्रम तरहिं भव नाथ सो समरामहे ॥ १२ ॥

jē gyāna māna bimatta tava bhava harani bhakti na ādarī. 9.
tē pā'i sura durlabha padādapi parata hama dēkhata harī. 10.
bīsvāsa kari saba āsa parihari dāsa tava jē hō'i rahē. 11.
japi nāma tava binu śrama tarahiṁ bhava nātha sō samarāmahē. 12.

Those who became falsely proud and haughty under the false impression that they are learned and wise (because they have studied the scriptures), and under their delusion and vanity had foolishly shown disrespect to or had discarded your devotion which is able to eliminate the fear of birth and death, oh Lord, we (the Vedas) have observed that such people have fallen from grace and become decimated inspite of having attained an exalted position in the rank and file of the society, and had achieved a stature that made them equivalent in honour and rank to Brahma (the creator) and other Gods¹. (9-10)

[¹Here the Vedas refer to those misguided people who say that they are learned and knowledgeable, that they know everything said in the scriptures about liberation and deliverance, such people have lost track of the reality in their vanity and arrogance of knowledge. They may acquire great respect, fame and honour in the world which looks upon them as its guide and teacher, being highly learned men of letters. These people call themselves Gurus, and gather a huge crowd of followers. In their false ego and self-proclaimed spiritual abilities, they declare themselves as super-humans and geniuses who know what is and how to attain freedom from the cycle of transmigration and the problems associated with it. The ignorant world begins to worship them as living gods or god-men; they are put on a pedestal equivalent to Brahma and the other Gods. But then what actually happens? Such pretenders not only sink their own boat but drag the entire fleet into drowning with them! They abandon the truthful path that provides liberation and deliverance to the creature, the path of 'devotion for Lord God' which is the path advised in the Vedas, because they think it is inconsequential and ineffective. Indeed, such misled people do not understand what true Gyan or enlightenment means; they have not understood the meaning and the intent of the Vedas. They do not understand that it is not the physical body of some prince known as Ram that is being honoured and praised by the Vedas, but it is the 'pure cosmic Consciousness' and the 'Supreme Being' in a manifested pure form that is being advised to be followed and having devotion for when the scriptures refer to Lord Ram.]

But when true wisdom and true knowledge dawns upon them, they realise their shortsightedness and folly, and then they abandon all other hopes and means (of attaining freedom from the cycle of birth and death and its accompanying horrors, of obtaining freedom from all sorrows incumbent with a mortal life in this gross, mundane and perishable world), and surrender before you to become your ardent devotee and follower.

They begin to rely solely upon repeating your holy name as a means to cross over this mundane world of transmigration very easily and effortlessly (instead of following so many difficult philosophies and paths for attaining the same destination as obtained simply by your devotion, such as the paths of doing 'Tapa' or severe penance and austerities, 'Yoga' or meditation, 'Dhyan' or contemplation, 'Yagya' or

various religious sacrifices, ‘Daan’ or making charities and giving alms, and so on and so forth).

Verily indeed, it is for this reason we the Vedas so reverentially bow before you (Lord Ram) and invoke your blessings. (11-12)

जे चरन सिव अज पूज्य रज सुभ परसि मुनिपतिनी तरी । १३ ।

नख निर्गता मुनि बंदिता त्रैलोक पावनि सुरसरी ॥ १४ ॥

ध्वज कुलिस अंकुस कंज जुत बन फिरत कंटक किन लहे । १५ ।

पद कंज द्वंद मुकुंद राम रमेस नित्य भजामहे ॥ १६ ॥

jē carana siva aja pūjya raja subha parasi munipatinī tarī. 13.

nakha nirgatā muni banditā trailōka pāvani surasarī. 14.

dhvaja kulisa aṅkusa kaṇja juta bana phirata kaṇṭaka kina lahē. 15.

pada kaṇja dvanda mukunda rāma ramēsa nitya bhajāmahē. 16.

Your holy feet are revered and worshipped by the unborn Brahma (“aja”)¹; and even Lord Shiva (the two Gods of the Trinity); the auspicious dust of your holy feet had liberated and redeemed the wife of sage Gautam (i.e. Ahilya from her curse that had made her into a stone, but she was freed from this curse when Lord Ram touched her with the dust of his feet)²,---[13]

---the stream of the holy river Ganges, known as ‘surasarī’ as it is the heavenly river (“sarī”) flowing in the heaven and adored by the Gods (“sura”), which is honoured even by the great sages and which purifies all the three divisions of the universe (i.e. the heaven, the earth and the nether world), has emerged from the nail of your holy feet³; ---[14]

---the holy feet the soles of which bear the auspicious signs of a flag, the thunderbolt, a goad and a lotus (the signs that are marked on the sole of Lord Vishnu’s divine feet) have been scarred by the thorns that pricked them as you walked barefoot on the path of the forest during your journey through it, ---[15]

---Oh Mukund (one who grants liberation), Oh Lord Ram, Oh Ramesh (the dear husband of goddess Rama or Laxmi)—we, the Vedas, worship and adore these two holy feet of yours most reverentially and devotionally. [16] (13-16)

[¹Brahma, the creator, was the first to come into existence when the Viraat Purush, the cosmic form of the Supreme Being, decided to initiate the process of creation. Brahma was this Supreme Being’s first revelation with the express purpose of initiating the process of creation. He is said to ‘unborn’ as he did not take birth in the conventional way other living beings were created; there was no father from whom he was born—for he was a self-manifested form of the Viraat Purush. He is the most ancient of the Gods, and the eldest Being in creation; there is no forefather of Brahma. He derives his name from “Brahm”, the Supreme Being and the cosmic Consciousness that took a form known as Brahma as the first step towards the rolling forward the cycle of creation. Since he had no predecessor, he is called ‘Unborn’.

²The story of Ahilya’s liberation is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 211.

It has been described in detail in Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas, in its Baal Kand, Canto no. 5, verse nos. 14—42.

³The story of river Ganges was described in brief to Lord Ram by sage Vishwamitra in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 212.

It has been described in detail in: (i) The story of the origin of the holy river Ganges is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat Mahapurāṇ, Skandha 5, Canto 17, verse nos. 1-10; and (ii) Valmiki's Ramayan, Baal Kand, Sarga 38—44.]

अव्यक्तमूलमनादि तरु त्वच चारि निगमागम भने । १७ ।

षट् कंध साखा पंच बीस अनेक पर्न सुमन घने ॥ १८ ॥

फल जुगल बिधि कटु मधुर बेलि अकेलि जेहि आश्रित रहे । १९ ।

पल्लवत फूलत नवल नित संसार बिटप नमामहे ॥ २० ॥

abyaktamūlamanādi taru tvaca cāri nigamāgama bhanē. 17.

ṣaṭa kandha sākhā pañca bīsa anēka parna sumana ghanē. 18.

phala jugala bidhi kaṭu madhura bēli akēli jēhi āśrita rahē. 19.

pallavata phūlata navala nita sansāra biṭapa namāmahē. 20.

[These verses describe the cosmic form of Lord Ram as the Viraat Purush or the Supreme Being. It is envisioned here that the Lord is like a huge Tree from which the creation has emerged.]

Oh Lord! You are 'Abyakta' (one who is so subtle and sublime that he cannot be described and seen; one who is not revealed but permeates and pervades through out the creation in an invisible form; one who is invisible yet whose presence and existence are irrefutable); you are 'Mūla' or the essence and root of this creation and everything that exists in it (i.e. the entire gamut of creation has its origin in you); you are 'Anādi' or one who has no end or beginning, and you are the 'Mūlamanā' or the primary form of the cosmic mind represented by the original Nature known as the Prakriti from which the rest of everything in existence emerged. [In other words, the Lord is the "root" of the primary cosmic Tree. This Tree has been in existence since time immemorial, and no one knows about its roots which pre-existed the time itself.]

The Vedas (ancient scriptures) and the Agamas (the Tantras) affirm that this huge cosmic Tree has four layers of bark (taru tvaca cāri). [These symbolise the four states of existence of consciousness in this creation: viz. (i) the waking state known as the Jagrat, (ii) the dreaming state known as the Swapna, (iii) the deep sleep state known as the Sushupta, (iv) and the transcendental state of pure consciousness known as the 'self' or the Turiya.] (17)

It has six stems (ṣaṭa kandha). [These are the six forms in which the creation exists: viz. (i) to be known as 'Asti', (ii) to come into existence known as 'Jaayate', (iii) to undergo transformation and change of form known as 'Viparinamate', (iv) to grow and develop known as 'Vardhate', (v) to decay known as 'Kshiyate', and (vi) to perish known as 'Kshiyate'.]

It has twenty-five branches (sākhā pañca bīsa). [These are the following: Prakriti or primary Nature + Mahat or the cosmic intellect and reason + Ahankar or the cosmic senses of ego and pride + Mana or the cosmic mind + Chitta or the cosmic sub-conscious aspect of the mind and intellect + the five cosmic organs of perception such as hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling and tasting + the five cosmic aspects of perception such as to hear, to see, to feel, to smell and to taste that are collectively

called the Tanmatras or subtle elements + the five principal elements that together make the building blocks of this gross creation, called Panch-Mahabhuts, such as the sky, air, fire, water and earth = twenty-five basic aspects of creation which were revealed from the root of this cosmic Tree.]

This Tree has countless leaves and beautiful flowers of all hues (*anēka parna sumana ghanē*). [These refer to the myriad forms with countless variations in which this colourful creation exists. It also means that the countless desires that exist in this creation are the many leaves of this gigantic Tree of creation, and the equally countless ways and means adopted to fulfill these desires are the flowers because these ways and means result in reaching the goal because these ‘flowers’ represent the visible reward of all successful the efforts made to fulfill one’s desires.] (18)

This Tree bears two types of fruits—ones that are sweet, and others that are bitter (*phala jugala bidhi kaṭu madhura*). [These two types of fruits symbolise either a happy or an unhappy experience that a person has in this world; they represent success and failure in this world. Some of the efforts to fulfill one’s desires yield happy results, and others make a person feel bitter and sad. Thus, the sense of pleasure and joy on the one hand, and sorrows and pain on the other hand are the two types of sweet and bitter fruits respectively found on this Tree.]

The Tree has a creeper that is entwined around it and finds its support in this Tree (*bēli akēli jēhi āśrita rahē*). [This creeper that clings to this Tree is the ‘Maya’ or the delusions that firmly grasps everything in this creation in its tentacles just like a creeper that firmly holds on to a tree and thrives on it.] (19)

This ‘creeper’ thrives and draws its nourishment from this cosmic Tree, and it gives out newer leaves and flowers of its own every now and then in a perpetual manner (*pallavata phūlata navala nita*). [That is, Maya creates its own set of desires and yearnings, and impels the creature to make efforts to fulfill them.]

Oh Lord! We most reverentially bow before this cosmic form of yours which is like a huge Cosmic Tree of the Universe from which everything that exists has emerged and upon which the entire universe rests (*sansāra biṭapa namāmahē*).

जे ब्रह्म अजमद्वैतमनुभवगज्ज मनपर ध्यावहीं । २१ ।

ते कहहुँ जानहुँ नाथ हम तव सगुन जस नित गावहीं ॥ २२ ॥

करुनायतन प्रभु सदगुनाकर देव यह बर मागहीं । २३ ।

मन बचन कर्म बिकार तजि तव चरन हम अनुरागहीं ॥ २४ ॥

jē brahma ajamadvaitamanubhavagamyā manapara dhyāvahīm. 21.

tē kahahum̐ jānahum̐ nātha hama tava saguna jasa nita gāvahīm. 22.

karunāyatana prabhu sadagunākara dēva yaha bara māgahīm. 23.

mana bacana karma bikāra taji tava carana hama anurāgahīm. 24.

That Brahm who is without a birth (aja), who is non-dual and one of his kind (advaita), who is known or realised only through experience (and not through scholarship of the scriptures; ‘anubhavagamyā’), and who is beyond the reach of the Mana (mind and its intellectual and reasoning faculties; ‘manapara’)—verily, there are some wise ones who contemplate and meditate upon Brahm with this eclectic knowledge and holistic view (dhyāvahīm). (21)

Well, let them say so and know you in the way that pleases them, but as far as we (the Vedas) are concerned, oh Lord, we prefer always to adore and worship you and sing your Saguna or manifested form which we behold before us right now. (22)

Oh Lord who are an abode and an embodiment of mercy, compassion and kindness (*karunāyatana prabhu*)! Oh Lord who is a mine of excellent virtues and glorious characters (*sadagunākara dēva*)! We ask for this boon that we may have everlasting devotion and affection in your holy feet (*tava carana hama anurāgahīm*) after having abandoned all faults and negativities from our mind, heart, speech and actions (*mana bacana karma bikāra taji*). [That is, please bless us that we can worship and adore you with a clean and purified mind and heart, that our actions and deeds and words become auspicious so much so that they not only make us eligible for your worship but help us in doing so, because otherwise they would create unwarranted obstacles in our path and pull the rug from under our feet.] (23-24)'

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(3.9) Lord Ram's Hymn by Lord Shiva

Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 1—20 that precede Doha no. 14.

छं०. जय राम रमारमनं समनं । भव ताप भयाकुल पाहि जनं ॥ १ ॥

अवधेस सुरेस रमेस बिभो । सरनागत मागत पाहि प्रभो ॥ २ ॥

chanda.

jaya rāma ramāramanaṁ samanaṁ. bhava tāpa bhayākula pāhi janam. 1.
avadhēsa surēsa ramēsa bibhō. saraṇāgata māgata pāhi prabhō. 2.

‘Glory and Hail to Lord Ram who is dear to goddess Rama (Laxmi), and who destroys all fears arising out of this world of transmigration and its accompanying horrors that torments his devotees! Oh Lord, save this humble servant (i.e. devotee and follower) of yours who is agitated exceedingly due to the horrors of the endless cycle of birth and death in this world. (1)

Oh Lord of Ayodhya! Oh Lord of the Gods! Oh Lord of Rama (goddess Laxmi)! Oh Vibho (the Lord who is all-mighty, all-pervading, all-encompassing, omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent, and who is the undisputable Lord God of this world)! This humble one who has taken refuge with you ask for only one blessing and boon—which is that you grant your unconditional and unwavering protection to me. (2)

दससीस बिनासन बीस भुजा । कृत दूरि महा महि भूरि रुजा ॥ ३ ॥
रजनीचर बृंद पतंग रहे । सर पावक तेज प्रचंड दहे ॥ ४ ॥

dasasīsa bināsana bīsa bhujā. kṛta dūri mahā mahi bhūri rujā. 3.
rajanīcara bṛnda pataṅga rahē. sara pāvaka tēja pracaṇḍa dahē. 4.

Oh Lord (Sri Ram) who has slayed the ten-headed and twenty-armed demon (Ravana, the king of Lanka), and has thereby freed the whole earth from the huge, interminable and horrifying torments and sorrows from which it was suffering due to this evil rascal¹. (3)

All the demons, who were like insects, got scorched in the fire represented by your fierce arrows. (4)

[¹The sort of horrors and cruelty that the demons had unleashed on the earth has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 179—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 184.]

महि मंडल मंडन चारुतरं । धृत सायक चाप निषंग बरं ॥ ५ ॥
मद मोह महा ममता रजनी । तम पुंज दिवाकर तेज अनी ॥ ६ ॥

mahi maṇḍala maṇḍana cārutaram. dhṛta sāyaka cāpa niṣaṅga baram. 5.
mada mōha mahā mamatā rajanī. tama puñja divākara tēja anī. 6.

Oh Lord! You are like the best and awesome ornamentation of this creation (i.e. it is you who gives this creation its charm and attractiveness for which it is so famous; the creation would lose its meaning and substance without you because you are the soul of this creation; nothing and no one is better than you).

Your beauteous form holds a bow, an arrow and a quiver. (5)

For the purpose of destroying (vanquishing; eliminating) the dark foreboding night symbolized by the negative qualities of ‘Mada’ (vanity, false pride, ego, haughtiness, arrogance, hypocrisy), ‘Moha’ and ‘Mamta’ (attractions, infatuations, attachments with the world and its sense objects), you are like the brilliant light of the sun. [Just as the sun-light immediately removes all darkness, your mere presence is sufficient to get rid of these dark traits in a creature.] (6)

मनजात किरात निपात किए । मृग लोग कुभोग सरेन हिए ॥ ७ ॥
हति नाथ अनाथनि पाहि हरे । बिषया बन पावँर भूलि परे ॥ ८ ॥

manajāta kirāta nipāta ki'ē. mrga lōga kubhōga sarēna hi'ē. 7.
hati nātha anāthani pāhi harē. biṣayā bana pāvam̐ra bhūli parē. 8.

The hunter represented by ‘Kaam’ (lust and passions) have killed (conquered and subdued) the deer representing all the creatures of this world by hitting it with an

arrow symbolized by 'Bhog' (desire for gratification of the sense organs; the desire to enjoy the world of material things). (7)

Oh Lord! Oh Hari (one who removes all sorts of negativity and misery)! Kill that hunter ('Kaam') and save the foolish and vile creatures of this world who are tormented by him. [The creatures are deemed to be 'foolish' because they allow themselves to be trapped in the snare laid by worldly delusions, and they are 'vile' because they commit so many grave sins that their redemption is only possible by the intervention of the Lord.] (8)

बहु रोग बियोगन्हि लोग हए । भवदंघ्रि निरादर के फल ए ॥ ९ ॥
भव सिंधु अगाध परे नर ते । पद पंकज प्रेम न जे करते ॥ १० ॥

bahu rōga biyōganhi lōga ha'ē. bhavadaṅghri nirādara kē phala ē. 9.
bhava sindhu agādha parē nara tē. pada paṅkaja prēma na jē karatē. 10.

The people are tormented by countless moral diseases as well as misery and grief that are caused by separation (here meaning 'death' because it causes separation not only from one's dear ones but also from the world which the 'foolish and vile' creature thinks belongs to him, and to which it clings greedily). All this is due to the insult caused by them to your holy feet—that is, it is due to the fact that the creatures have turned away from you and your devotion, and instead have got indulgent in the affairs of the perishable, mortal and mundane world of sense objects, something that cannot give them peace and happiness even in their imagination, but only causes sufferings and grief. (9)

Verily indeed and in all sooth, those who have no devotion for your holy feet fall into an ocean represented by this deluding world consisting of an endless cycle of miseries and grief as well as birth and death (10)

अति दीन मलीन दुखी नितहीं । जिन्ह कें पद पंकज प्रीति नहीं ॥ ११ ॥
अवलंब भवंत कथा जिन्ह कें । प्रिय संत अनंत सदा तिन्ह कें ॥ १२ ॥

ati dīna malīna dukhī nitahīm. jinha kēm pada paṅkaja prīti nahīm. 11.
avalamba bhavanta kathā jinha kēm. priya santa ananta sadā tinha kēm. 12.

Truly, those who have no devotion in your holy feet, are subjected to regular agony, are extremely unfortunate, and are endlessly sad and sorrowful. (11)

On the other hand, those who find your divine stories interesting and rely upon them to derive happiness, joy, peace and bliss find solace in the company of saints and righteous people (because here they can hear about you and your divine stories instead of worldly talks). (12)

[To wit, foolish people find a sense of false joy in the company of worldly people where things are talked about concerning the world which is a treasury of sorrows and grief. But in their ignorance such people do not realise that they are only wasting their time in illusionary happiness that is superficial and short-lived. On the other hand, those who are wise and enlightened spend their time in the company of saintly people where your divine stories and all matters pertaining to the elevation of

the soul are discussed and talked about. It is an old adage that “a man becomes like the company one keeps”; so how can the former expect to get eternal spiritual peace in the wrong company?

नहिं राग न लोभ न मान मदा । तिन्ह कें सम बैभव वा बिपदा ॥ १३ ॥
एहि ते तव सेवक होत मुदा । मुनि त्यागत जोग भरोस सदा ॥ १४ ॥

nahim rāga na lōbha na māna madā. tinha kēm sama baibhava vā bipadā. 13.
ēhi tē tava sēvaka hōta mudā. muni tyāgata jōga bharōsa sadā. 14.

Such people (who keep good company and have devotion for you, those who have surrendered themselves at your holy feet and adore you) have no negativities as ‘Raag’ (attachments, infatuations), ‘Lobha’ (greed, avarice, rapacity), ‘Maan’ (false pride, ego, vanity), and ‘Mada’ (arrogance, haughtiness) in them. They treat good fortunes and misfortunes equally (i.e. they have developed, nurtured and inculcated the grand virtue of equanimity, neutrality and dispassion in them). (13)

Wise sages prefer to have devotion and affection for you instead of pursuing Yoga (meditation) to attain their spiritual goals (because the path of ‘Bhakti’ or devotion is far easier and convenient as compared to the path of Yoga)¹. (14)

[¹Even the Vedas has affirmed this fact in their prayer in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chanda line nos. 9-12 that precede Doha no. 13.]

करि प्रेम निरंतर नेम लिएँ । पद पंकज सेवत सुद्ध हिएँ ॥ १५ ॥
सम मानि निरादर आदरही । सब संत सुखी बिचरंति मही ॥ १६ ॥

kari prēma nirantara nēma li'ēm'. pada paṅkaja sēvata sud'dha hi'ēm'. 15.
sama māni nirādara ādarahī. saba santa sukhī bicaranti mahī. 16.

Such saintly people develop deep devotion and intense affection for you, and serve your holy feet and remember you constantly, always repeating your holy name with a pure and clean heart (which is uncorrupt, unpretentious, are free of delusions, free from all conceit and deceit). (15)

They treat insult and praise equally, with stoic indifference, and thereby roam on this earth peacefully and cheerfully (without feeling hurt and emotionally upset by such insults and harsh words uttered against them—for they leave it upon you to punish their tormentors, and also because they know that such people are fools of the highest order who are best neglected and left aside). (15-16)

मुनि मानस पंकज भृंग भजे । रघुबीर महा रनधीर अजे ॥ १७ ॥
तव नाम जपामि नमामि हरी । भव रोग महागद मान अरी ॥ १८ ॥

muni mānasa paṅkaja bhr̥ṅga bhajē. raghubīra mahā ranadhīra ajē. 17.
tava nāma japāmi namāmi harī. bhava rōga mahāgada māna arī. 18.

Oh Lord Raghubir (the brave Lord of the Raghu Race), and one who is invincible! Great sages and pious souls constantly worship you and remain ever submerged in your thoughts in their hearts just like the black-bee that hums and buzzes cheerfully over the open petals of the lotus flower, oblivious of all other things.

[The black-bee is so enamoured of the lotus flower that when it hovers over it, it forgets about its surroundings and even about its own self. Its entire being and attention is concentrated and focused on the lotus flower. Likewise, sages and pious souls find immense bliss and joy in remaining focused on the holy feet of Lord Ram so much so that their heart thinks of nothing else.] (17)

Oh Lord Hari, I worship and adore you most reverentially, and I always repeat your holy and divine name. I most respectfully bow before you.

Verily, you are a great remedy for the disease represented by the sufferings associated with birth and death (i.e. transmigration), and you are an enemy of Ahankar (false sense of pride, ego and vanity). [That is, Lord Ram helps the creature to free himself from the clutches of the cycle of birth and death in this mortal world by helping his soul to find liberation and deliverance. The Lord does not allow his devotees to suffer from the ill-effects of pride and ego.] (18)

गुण सील कृपा परमायतनं । प्रनमामि निरंतर श्रीरमनं ॥ १९ ॥

रघुनंद निकंदय द्वंद्वघनं । महिपाल बिलोकय दीनजनं ॥ २० ॥

guna sīla kṛpā paramāyatanam. pranamāmi nirantara śrīramanam. 19.
raghunanda nikandaya dvandvaghanam. mahipāla bilōkaya dīnajanam. 20.

Oh Lord! You are a sovereign abode of the grandest and the best of virtues and excellent qualities in creation; you are an embodiment of goodness, graciousness, courteousness and amiability; you are a fount of mercy, compassion and kindness!

Oh Lord who is dear to Rama (goddess Laxmi)! I always bow most reverentially before you; I always greet you most warmly. (19)

Oh Lord Raghunandan (the Lord who is the descendent of the Race of king Raghu of Ayodhya)! You are the one who dispels all the confusions and dilemmas arising out of numerous contradictions and paradoxes in this world (nikandaya dvandvaghanam).

Oh Lord who are the protector and sustainer of this earth (mahipāla)! Please be kind to cast your gracious and benevolent glance upon this humble servant (devotee and follower) of yours too. (20)

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(3.10) Lord Ram's Hymn by sages Sankadi

Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 36.

चौ०. सुनि प्रभु बचन हरषि मुनि चारी । पुलकित तन अस्तुति अनुसारी ॥ १ ॥

जय भगवंत अनंत अनामय । अनघ अनेक एक करुनामय ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

sunī prabhu bacana haraṣi muni cārī. pulakita tana astuti anusārī. 1.
jaya bhagavanta ananta anāmaya. anagha anēka ēka karunāmaya. 2.

Hearing the polite words of Lord Ram, the four sages (i.e. the Sankadi sages) felt exhilarated. They began to pray to Lord Ram with a thrilled body. (1)

The Sankadi sages said: ‘Glory to the Supreme Lord who is infinite and has no end, who has no faults and shortcomings, who is sinless and immaculate, who manifests himself in multitude of forms but essentially remains one and the same¹, and who is an embodiment of mercy, compassion and kindness. (2)

[Note—¹Refer: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 13; (b) Kishkindha Kand, (ii) Doha no. 3; (c) Lanka Kand, (iii) Doha no. 14—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 15.]

जय निर्गुन जय जय गुन सागर । सुख मंदिर सुंदर अति नागर ॥ ३ ॥

जय इंदिरा रमन जय भूधर । अनुपम अज अनादि सोभाकर ॥ ४ ॥

jaya nirguna jaya jaya guna sāgara. sukha mandira sundara ati nāgara. 3.
jaya indirā ramana jaya bhūdhara. anupama aja anādi sōbhākara. 4.

Glory to the Lord (Ram) who is free from the effects of all the three worldly qualities (of Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna), as well as all attributes that are related to the gross mortal world!

Glory to the Lord (Ram) who is an ocean of all the excellent virtues and noble characters imaginable!

Glory to the Lord (Ram) who is a beautiful temple or a blissful abode of joy and happiness (i.e. who grants bliss and beatitude, happiness and joy to all those who come to the Lord to seek his blessings)!

Glory to the Lord (Ram) who is very wise, erudite, sagacious and judicious! (3)

Glory to Lord Ram who is the dear Lord of Laxmi, the goddess of wealth, prosperity and well-being (indirā ramana)!

Glory to Lord Ram who sustains and supports the earth and all its creatures!

Glory to Lord Ram who has no parallel, who cannot be compared with anyone else as he is peerless, who has no birth as he is eternal and imperishable, who predates everything in this creation, and who is a mine of magnificence, grace, majesty and elegance! (4)

ग्यान निधान अमान मानप्रद । पावन सुजस पुरान बेद बद ॥ ५ ॥

तग्य कृतग्य अग्यता भंजन । नाम अनेक अनाम निरंजन ॥ ६ ॥

gyāna nidhāna amāna mānaprada. pāvana sujasa purāna bēda bada. 5.
tagya kṛtagya agyatā bhañjana. nāma anēka anāma nirañjana. 6.

Glory to Lord Ram who is a treasure house of wisdom, gnosis, knowledge, both of the secular kind as well as of the spiritual kind!

Glory to Lord Ram who has no desire to be honoured or glorified, but he grants honours and glories to others (such as his devotees)!

The Vedas and the Purans (ancient scriptures) laud the Lord's excellent glories and pay tributes to his majesty by way of singing hymns in his honour! (5)

Lord Ram knows and understands the deepest meaning and the subtlest truth of all things, and is well-versed in the minutest details of the principles of metaphysics, theology, spiritualism and secularism.

Lord Ram acknowledges the smallest of service done to him, and is an eliminator of ignorance and delusions.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art free from all delusions and taints of all shades!

Oh Lord Ram, there are countless names by which thou art known, but essentially there is no name that can be said to be thy real name (for all names apply to thee equally, and at the same time none of them can be said to thy true name). [This is because every name has a particular meaning and relates to a specific attribute of a person, and therefore each name defines a particular quality and attributes of yours. But none of the names can define you completely, for you are beyond definition and are without attributes.] (6)

सर्व सर्वगत सर्व उरालय । बससि सदा हम कहूँ परिपालय ॥ ७ ॥

द्वंद्व बिपति भव फंद बिभंजय । हृदि बसि राम काम मद गंजय ॥ ८ ॥

sarba sarbagata sarba urālaya. basasi sadā hama kahum̐ paripālaya. 7.
dvanda bipati bhava phanda bibhañjaya. hṛdi basi rāma kāma mada gañjaya. 8.

Oh Lord Ram, you have manifested yourself in all forms, visible and invisible, animate and inanimate, in his creation—i.e. everything and every creature in this creation is one or the other form of your own self. [This is because Lord Ram is the Supreme Being, known as Brahm in the words of the Upanishads, and the entire creation, from the minutest to the most colossus, is a manifestation of Brahm.]

Oh Lord Ram, it is you who pervades and live inside the entire creation in a uniform and subtle way as the Atma, the pure consciousness that gives life to this creation. [Without the Atma, the world is dead. From the perspective of metaphysics, Lord Ram is the cosmic Consciousness or the Supreme Atma that makes its presence felt in all living beings as the individual's Atma, or the individual creature's 'true self' which is pure consciousness, for the 'true self' of the creature is not his gross mortal body.]

Therefore oh Lord Ram, please protect, support and take care of us (for thou art the true Lord of this creation, and it is thee who support and protect our lives from

within us by living in our inner-self as the pure conscious Atma, because if the Atma leaves the body, the latter would be dead). (7)

Oh Lord Ram, thou art the destroyer or eliminator of all kinds of doubts and uncertainties that torment a creature.

Oh Lord Ram, please be gracious to free us from the shackles of birth and death, as well as fear from adversities, misery, grief, distress and misfortunes that are inherent to this mortal gross world.

Oh Lord Ram, please make our inner-self as thy holy abode, and clean our inner-selves from within by removing all taints such as Kaam and Mada (passions, lust, desires, arrogance, haughtiness, pride etc. respectively) that undermine the purity of our character as well as darken the natural shine and glory of our Atma.¹ (8)

[Note—1It is easy to understand what sages Sankadi are requesting Lord Ram by taking a simple example. Suppose there is a dark room. There are two ways to illuminate it—one is to open its windows and let the light from the outside come in, and the other way is to light a lamp inside the room itself and place it in the center. It is very obvious that the room will be better and more uniformly illuminated in the latter case as compared to the former case.

Hence, it is better to enshrine Lord Ram as a deity consecrated in a temple symbolised by our hearts so that the lamp of holiness, piety and purity that is lit within us is able to light our inner-self and remove all traces of darkness from within, as compared to worshipping Lord Ram and glorifying him in the outside world as a deity consecrated in a physical temple. One has to visit a temple to enjoy its auspicious and spiritual environment, but when that temple exists inside our own self, it goes everywhere we go, making it possible for us to enjoy the same auspiciousness and spiritual environment from very close quarters at all times of our lives, day in and day out.]

दो०. परमानंद कृपायतन मन परिपूरन काम ।

प्रेम भगति अनपायनी देहु हमहि श्रीराम ॥ ३४ ॥

dōhā.

paramānanda kṛpāyatana mana paripūrana kāma.
prēma bhagati anapāyanī dēhu hamahi śrīrāma. 34.

Sages Sankadi said: ‘Oh Lord Ram! Thou art an embodiment of supreme bliss, thou art an abode of kindness, compassion and mercy, and thou fulfills all desires of thy devotees.

Oh gracious Lord Ram, therefore we request thee to bless us by granting us the boon of having an eternal and never-diminishing affection, love and devotion for thee.¹ (Doha no. 34)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 107 (sage Bharadwaj); (b) Aranya Kand, (ii) Chaupai line no. 13 that precedes Doha no. 10; (iii) Chaupai line no. 26 that precedes Doha no. 11 (sage Sutikshan); (iv) Chaupai line nos. 10-11 that precede Doha no. 13 (sage Agastya).]

चौ०. देहु भगति रघुपति अति पावनि । त्रिबिधि ताप भव दाप नसावनि ॥ १ ॥

प्रनत काम सुरधेनु कलपतरु । होइ प्रसन्न दीजै प्रभु यह बरु ॥ २ ॥

caupāī.

dēhu bhagati raghupati ati pāvani. tribidhi tāpa bhava dāpa nasāvani. 1.
pranata kāma suradhēnu kalapataru. hō'i prasanna dījai prabhu yaha baru. 2.

Sankadi sages reiterated: ‘Oh Lord Ram (raghupati)! We earnestly beg you to bless us so that we are bestowed with the boon of having an eternal, steady and abiding devotion for you, because this virtue known as ‘devotion for Lord Ram’ is the purest, the most eclectic, the holiest and the most auspicious form of boon that one can ever expect to be granted in this world¹. It is able to eliminate all the three types of torments and miseries² associated with the cycle of life and death in this mortal world, and it removes all fears and consternations related to them. (1)

Oh Lord Ram! Thou art like the all wish-fulfilling Tree of heaven called ‘Kalpa Taru’, as well as the heavenly Holy Cow known as ‘Kaamdhenu’ that too grants anything one seeks from it, because thou fulfills all wishes and desires of those who take shelter with thee, and surrender themselves before thine auspicious and holy Self. (2)

[Note—¹The saintly crow Kaagbhusund too had asked Lord Ram to grant him only this boon, and no other kind of boons, when the Lord was ready to give him whatever he wished to have. The Lord had already blessed Kaagbhusund with a variety of boons, but the Lord cleverly stopped short of granting him the virtue of ‘devotion’, perhaps to test Kaagbhusund’s wisdom, as well as his faith and dedication to the Lord. Kaagbhusund thought that though Lord Ram was ready to grant him everything he wished, but the Lord didn’t mention ‘devotion’ in the list of boons he was ready to grant him. So, Kaagbhusund immediately asked Lord Ram that if he indeed wants to grant the former anything, then the only thing he wants from the Lord is ‘devotion for Lord Ram’ and nothing else. This submission of the saintly crow pleased Lord Ram mightily, and the Lord was very impressed with Kaagbhusund’s wisdom and sagacity, so much so that the Lord openly expressed his appreciation of Kaagbhusund and praised him for his wisdom, erudition and sagacity. The Lord himself told Kaagbhusund that what he has asked for, i.e. ‘to have devotion for Lord Ram’, is the wisest and the best decision of his life, and then the Lord goes on to enumerate the many auspicious benefits and spiritual rewards that ‘devotion’ brings to his devotees.

This event is narrated in detail in: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 83—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 88.

Earlier, Lord Ram had granted this boon of ‘devotion’ to sage Sutikshan in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 26 that precedes Doha no. 11.

Sage Agastya too had sought this boon of ‘devotion’ in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 9-10 that precede Doha no. 13.

Even sage Atri has lauded the glories of the virtue of ‘devotion for Lord Ram’ in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chanda line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 6.

Lord Ram has also advised Sabari that devotion for him was one of the nine paths leading to liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation of a creature.

And finally, sage Narad was given a similar advice by Lord Ram in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Chaupai line no. 10 that precedes Doha no. 43.

²The three causes for all types of torments and miseries in this world are the following: (i) Daihik – related to one's body, such as sickness; (ii) Bhautik –related to this world, such as from other creatures, enemies, natural calamities, etc.; and (iii) Daivik –related to malignant stars, evil spirits and antagonized gods etc. that cause unwarranted and insurmountable problems for a person.]

भव बारिधि कुंभज रघुनायक । सेवत सुलभ सकल सुख दायक ॥ ३ ॥
मन संभव दारुन दुख दारय । दीनबंधु समता बिस्तारय ॥ ४ ॥

bhava bāridhi kumbhaja raghunāyaka. sēvata sulabha sakala sukha dāyaka.

3.

mana sambhava dārūna dukha dāraya. dīnabandhu samatā bistāraya. 4.

Oh Lord Ram (raghunāyaka)! Thou art like sage Agastya with respect to drying up the vast ocean representing the endless cycle of birth and death¹, and service to thee is a panacea that grants a creature an easy access to all kinds of joy and happiness in this world. (3)

Oh Lord, thou art an eternal friend of those who are humble, distressed and lowly (dīnabandhu)! Please eliminate all sorrows and miseries that have their origin in our minds and hearts (by calming them down and giving our mind and hearts stability and peace).

Oh gracious Lord! Please enhance the uniformity, stability and tranquility of our minds so that we develop the virtue of equanimity, equality and forbearance under all circumstances in our lives. (4)

[Note—¹Sage Agastya had once gulped the whole ocean and dried it up. In this parallel, Lord Ram, like sage Agastya, dries up the vast ocean symbolized by the endless cycle of birth and death that stands between the creature and his ultimate attainment of emancipation and salvation that would grant his soul eternal peace, rest, bliss, beatitude and felicity.

To wit, by serving Lord Ram and having devotion for him, his devotees are able to easily attain liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration to attain emancipation and salvation, leading to their soul finding eternal bliss, peace, rest, beatitude and felicity.]

आस त्रास इरिषादि निवारक । बिनय बिबेक बिरति बिस्तारक ॥ ५ ॥
भूप मौलि मनि मंडन धरनी । देहि भगति संसृति सरि तरनी ॥ ६ ॥

āsa trāsa iriṣādi nivāraka. binaya bibēka birati bistāraka. 5.

bhūpa mauḷi maṇi maṇḍana dharanī. dēhi bhagati sansṛti sari taranī. 6.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art the eliminator of all sorts of torments, miseries and fears arising from the negative trait of having jealousy and envy with others in this world.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art an enhancer of the grand positive virtues of politeness and goodness, of wisdom, erudition and sagacity, as well as renunciation, dispassion and detachment from this artificial material world. (5)

Oh Lord Ram, thou are the most exalted Lord and a King-Emperor of all the Kings and Rulers in this world (*bhūpa mauli*).

Oh Lord Ram, thou art like a jewel that adorns this earth (*mani maṇḍana dharanī*)! Please grant us the boon of ‘devotion for thee’ which acts like a boat (or barge) that is able to take a creature across the turbulent and churning waters of a river symbolized by this world of transmigration.

[To wit, this river is terrifying to behold, and it would drown anybody who tries to cross it. But oh Lord, devotion for thee is such a sturdy and robust boat that it makes sure that all those who board it are safely taken across the turbulent waters of this symbolic river to the other side, so that they are able to escape being drowned and sucked in the whirlpool of birth and death, with their attendant horrors and miseries. Those who have devotion for Lord Ram find deliverance by being able to cross over this river representing the endless cycle of birth and death to find emancipation and salvation for themselves.] (6)

मुनि मन मानस हंस निरंतर । चरन कमल बंदित अज संकर ॥ ७ ॥

रघुकुल केतु सेतु श्रुति रच्छक । काल करम सुभाउ गुन भच्छक ॥ ८ ॥

तारन तरन हरन सब दूषन । तुलसिदास प्रभु त्रिभुवन भूषन ॥ ९ ॥

muni mana mānasa hansa nirantara. carana kamala bandita aja saṅkara. 7.
raghukula kētu sētu śruti racchaka. kāla karama subhā'u guna bhacchaka. 8.
tāraṇa tarana harana saba dūṣana. tulasidāsa prabhu tribhuvana bhūṣana. 9.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art like a divine Swan that permanently floats in the clean and purified lake represented by the heart and the mind of saintly and pious people.

Thine auspicious and holy lotus-like feet are worshipped by Brahma, the creator, and Lord Shiva, the concluder of this creation. (7)

Oh Lord Ram, thou art a flag bearer of the glory and majesty of the illustrious line of kings descending from the ancient King Raghu of Ayodhya (*raghukula kētu*)!

Oh Lord Ram, thou art a protector and upholder of the auspicious path shown by the Vedas—i.e. thou art a supporter, a protector, a proponent and a practitioner of the tenets of the Vedas and other ancient scriptures.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art an eliminator of the negative effects of Kaal (time, especially misfortunes), Karma (evil consequences of bad deeds done by a creature), Nature (the natural habits and temperaments of a person that tend to make him think in the wrong direction, and also make him swerve towards doing evil things), and the three Gunas (i.e. the three natural qualities of Sata Guna, Raja Guna and Tama Guna that are present in all living beings in varying proportions, and together they decide a person's attitude, behaviour, character and way of thinking). [To wit, Lord Ram neutralizes the negative consequences of all these things.] (8)

Oh Lord Ram, thou art a boat thyself and act as a boat for thy devotees too for the purpose of crossing over the vast symbolic ocean of transmigration that this gross mundane world represents.

Oh Lord Ram, thou art an eliminator of all faults and vices that act as taints and shackles for a creature.'

[Finally, Tulsidas, the saintly poet who penned this divine Story of Lord Ram which we are reading now, concludes narrating the prayers offered to Lord Ram by Sankadi sages by saying something for himself as follows—] 'Oh Lord Ram, thou art an ornament of all the three divisions of this creation¹, as well as of Tulsidas.' (9)

[Note—¹The three divisions of this world are—the heaven, the earth, and the nether or the subterranean world. It also refers to the past, the present and the future.]

दो०. बार बार अस्तुति करि प्रेम सहित सिरु नाइ ।

ब्रह्म भवन सनकादि गे अति अभीष्ट बर पाइ ॥ ३५ ॥

dōhā.

bāra bāra astuti kari prēma sahita siru nā'i.

brahma bhavana sanakādi gē ati abhīṣṭa bara pā'i. 35.

Sages Sankadi prayed to Lord Ram repeatedly in the aforesaid manner, and then, having received the Lord's blessings that granted them what they dearly desired (which was the boon of having devotion for Lord Ram), they finally bowed before the Lord most affectionately, and then departed for the abode of Brahma, i.e. they went back to heaven from where they had come to visit and pay their obeisance to Lord Ram (brahma bhavana). (Doha no. 35)

चौ०. सनकादिक बिधि लोक सिधाए । भ्रातन्ह राम चरन सिरु नाए ॥ १ ॥

caupāī.

sanakādika bidhi lōka sidhā'ē. bhrātanha rāma carana siru nā'ē. 1.

After Sankadi sages went back to the abode of Brahma, the creator, the three brothers of Lord Ram (viz. Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughan) bowed their heads at the feet of Lord Ram. (1)

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(3.11) Lord Ram's Hymn by sage Vasistha

Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 36.

चौ०. एक बार बसिष्ठ मुनि आए । जहाँ राम सुखधाम सुहाए ॥ १ ॥
 अति आदर रघुनायक कीन्हा । पद पखारि पादोदक लीन्हा ॥ २ ॥
 caupāī.

ēka bāra basiṣṭa muni ā'ē. jahām̐ rāma sukhadhāma suhā'ē. 1.
 ati ādara raghunāyaka kīnhā. pada pakhāri pādōdaka līnhā. 2.

Once, sage Vasistha came (ā'ē) to the palace where Lord Ram, who had a charming personality, and was a personified form of the pleasant virtues of bliss, beatitude and joy, was present. (1)

Lord Ram, the Lord of the illustrious family of king Raghu (raghunāyaka), welcomed the sage most reverentially by washing the latter's feet, and then sipping that water as a sanctified liquid¹. (2)

[Note—¹Earlier, when sage Vasistha had visited Lord Ram in his palace to inform him that king Dasrath has decided to anoint him as the Regent of the kingdom, the Lord had welcomed the sage very warmly in almost a similar manner—apropos: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-4 that precede Doha no. 9.]

राम सुनहु मुनि कह कर जोरी । कृपासिंधु बिनती कछु मोरी ॥ ३ ॥
 देखि देखि आचरन तुम्हारा । होत मोह मम हृदय अपारा ॥ ४ ॥

rāma sunahu muni kaha kara jōrī. kṛpāsindhu binatī kachu mōrī. 3.
 dēkhi dēkhi ācarana tumhārā. hōta mōha mama hṛdayam̐ apārā. 4.

Sage Vasistha joined the palms of his hands in a prayerful mode and said to Lord Ram: 'Oh Ram, who is an ocean of grace, compassion, benevolence and kindness (kṛpāsindhu), please listen to a little prayer of mine. (3)

The more I see your worldly acts, the more I get deluded and the more my heart appears to be confused about your reality and divine nature.

[This is because you act like an ordinary human being, though I am fully aware that you are the Supreme Being who has come to this world with a divine purpose and on the specific request of the gods, mother earth and the great sages who asked you to deliver them from the scourge of the cruel demons. Besides this, my father, the creator Brahma, had also advised me that you are the Supreme Being, and I

will be most fortunate and blessed if I serve you by becoming a priest of the kingdom where you will be a king.]¹ (4)

[Note—¹Sage Vasistha was not the only one to get confused about the real identity of Lord Ram by seeing the Lord's perfect play as a human being. Others who got deluded and confused in a similar manner were goddess Sati, the consort of Lord Shiva*1, and Garud, the celestial mount of Lord Vishnu*2.

{Refer: Ram Charit Manas, *1 = (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 50—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 56; (ii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 108—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 111; (b) Uttar Kand, (iii) Doha no. 129 along with Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede it.

*2 = Uttar Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 58—to Doha no. 62; (ii) Doha no. 68—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 69.]

महिमा अमिति बेद नहिं जाना । में केहि भाँति कहउँ भगवाना ॥ ५ ॥
उपरोहित्य कर्म अति मंदा । बेद पुरान सुमृति कर निंदा ॥ ६ ॥

mahimā amiti bēda nahim jānā. maim kēhi bhām̐ti kaha'um̐ bhagavānā. 5.
uparōhitya karma ati mandā. bēda purāna sumṛti kara nindā. 6.

Oh gracious and revered Lord (bhagavānā)! There is neither any limit nor any measurement of your glories, holiness and divinity, for they are infinite and beyond comprehension. Even the Vedas (ancient scriptures) fail to comprehensively know you and describe your glories, then say how is it possible for me to know and fathom them? (5)

The profession (or the job) of priesthood is contemptible, and one of the most lowly of all engagements (ati mandā). The Vedas, the Purans and other scriptures condemn it as a vocation (kara nindā).

जब न लेउँ मैं तब बिधि मोही । कहा लाभ आगें सुत तोही ॥ ७ ॥
परमातमा ब्रह्म नर रूपा । होइहि रघुकुल भूषन भूपा ॥ ८ ॥

jaba na lē'um̐ maim taba bidhi mōhī. kahā lābha āgēm suta tōhī. 7.
paramātamā brahma nara rūpā. hō'ihī raghukula bhūṣana bhūpā. 8.

When I was reluctant to accept the post of a priest of Ayodhya, my father, the creator Brahma, told me: “My dear son, you shall have great rewards and feel blessed by accepting this job (so please don't hesitate). (7)

It is because the Parmatma, also known as Brahm, the Supreme Being and the Lord of the world, would manifest himself in a human form to become a great king who would be like a jewel in the illustrious race of kings descending from king Raghu who ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya.

[This being the case, you shall have the opportunity to serve and interact with the Lord at a very close and personal level, which would be feat unparalleled in history. So therefore, don't miss this golden chance. If you weigh the benefits against the drawbacks of the job of priesthood, you shall discover that the positive rewards would outmatch the negatives by a thousand counts.]” (8)

दो०. तब मैं हृदयँ बिचारा जोग जग्य ब्रत दान ।
जा कहूँ करिअ सो पैहउँ धर्म न एहि सम आन ॥ ४८ ॥

dōhā.

taba mair̥m hr̥dayam̥ bicārā jōga jagya brata dāna.
jā kahum̥ kari'a sō paiha'um̥ dharma na ēhi sama āna. 48.

Sage Vasistha continued: ‘Hearing Brahma’s advice, I thought the matter over in my heart and came to the conclusion that of all the positive rewards that one gets by pursuing so many religious and spiritual paths such as Yoga (meditation), Yagya (religious sacrifices), Vrat (keeping vows), Daan (making charities and giving alms) and the like, whatever positive consequences are due to a person who follows all such noble paths, none can match the spiritual rewards and the feeling of blessedness that one gets by being able to serve the Supreme Being at a personal level.

Verily indeed and in all sooth, my conscience told me that there is no better Dharma (moral duty and righteous way of offering one’s service to the Supreme Being) than being able to serve the Lord personally, the chance that I was being offered, and I would only prove myself to be a big fool if I miss it.’ (Doha no. 48)

चौ०. जप तप नियम जोग निज धर्मा । श्रुति संभव नाना सुभ कर्मा ॥ १ ॥
ग्यान दया दम तीरथ मज्जन । जहँ लगि धर्म कहत श्रुति सज्जन ॥ २ ॥
आगम निगम पुरान अनेका । पढ़े सुने कर फल प्रभु एका ॥ ३ ॥
तव पद पंकज प्रीति निरंतर । सब साधन कर यह फल सुंदर ॥ ४ ॥

caupāī.

japa tapa niyama jōga nija dharmā. śruti sambhava nānā subha karmā. 1.
gyāna dayā dama tīratha majjana. jaham̥ lagi dharma kahata śruti sajjana. 2.
āgama nigama purāna anēkā. par̥hē sunē kara phala prabhu ēkā. 3.
tava pada paṅkaja prīti nirantara. saba sādhana kara yaha phala sundara. 4.

Sage Vasistha further said: ‘All possible sorts of auspicious deeds as mentioned in the Vedas, such as Japa (repetition of holy Mantras or divine formulas dedicated to Lord God), Tapa (austerities and penances), Niyam (observing strict codes of a religious way of life), Yoga (meditation and contemplation), and diligently doing one’s assigned duties in a righteous and auspicious way, --- (1)

--- Gyan (acquisition of true knowledge of the scriptures), Daya (mercy), Dama (practicing self-restraint over one’s sense organs and natural urges), Tirath (pilgrimage to holy places), Majjan (cleansing of the body, as well as the mind and

the soul by pursuing a holy and religious way of life) and all other paths of Dharma (a righteous and auspicious way of life) that has been described and lauded by wise persons, --- (2)

--- As well as the good rewards of studying and hearing (reading and understanding) the different Aagams and Nigams¹, the Purans and other holy scriptures—oh Lord (prabhu), the best and the only reward of all such auspicious activities and noble pursuits in life --- (4)

--- Is to have steady, robust and sincere affection for your holy feet. Verily indeed, in all sooth and without gainsay, this is the most beautiful and the best fruit that one can expect to be blessed with by following all the above paths, individually or collectively. (4)

[Note—¹The āgama and the nigama:

(a) Aagam: These are ancient sacred books that teach the Truth in all its aspects. The word usually applies to the scriptures known as the Vedas. The Aagam is typically divided into four parts, known as the ‘Padas’ (pronounced as Pādas) as follows: (i) The Gyan Pada or Vidya Pada, where deep metaphysical and philosophical concepts are elucidated; (ii) The Yoga Pada, where Yoga or meditation and its practice is discussed to purify the mind and the body; (iii) The Kriya Pada, which details physical diagrams, postures and structural forms to be used in meditation as well as in temple construction and making of icons that represent the deity to be offered worship through meditation; and (iv) The Charayaa Pada, which are expositions on sacraments and codes of conduct to be followed by a spiritual aspirant.

So, the word ‘Aagam’ refers to the Tantra Sastras which deal with esoteric knowledge and forms of worship of the Supreme Being in his various forms, such as the three chief deities known as Shiva, Vishnu and Shakti, and it relies on occult practices using special Mantras that are specific to a particular deity.

Thus, in accordance to the deity to be worshipped, the Aagams are divided into three chief categories, viz. Shiva-aagams, Vishnu-aagams, and Shakti-aagams that are dedicated respectively to Lord Shiva who is the concluder of creation and the third God of the Trinity, Lord Vishnu who is the caretaker and protector of creation and the second God of the Trinity, and Shakti which is the personified form of cosmic dynamic power and energy of the Supreme Being that is employed to regulate the various functions of creation.

Amongst these three categories of Aagams based on the deity they are dedicated to, the ones pertaining to the Shakti are called ‘Tantra Shastras’, because they employ occult practices and esoteric formulas for worship purposes.

Meanwhile, the Vishnu-aagams are called ‘Samhitas’, and they prescribe that Lord Vishnu is the Supreme Being himself; and the Shiva-aagams are twenty-eight in number and stress that Lord Shiva is the Param Pati and the Param Purush, the Supreme Father and the Supreme Male of creation.

(b) Nigam: This word is used to mean the Vedas, the primary sacred scriptures. The word means ‘that through which the Absolute Truth is known or ascertained clearly’. In this sense, the art of logically explaining anything, as is the practice followed in the exposition of the Upanishads, is called a Nigam.

There are four primary Vedas, viz. the Rig, Saam, Yajur and Atharva. The Yajur Veda has two sub-categories, viz. the Shukla Yajur Veda and the Krishna Yajur Vedas. The metaphysical and spiritual Truth contained in these primary scriptures are expounded in the form of treatises called the Upanishads, also known as Vedanta, of which there are one hundred and eight in numbers—Rig Veda has ten Upanishads; Saam Veda has sixteen Upanishads; Krishna Yajur Veda has thirty-two Upanishads; Shukla Yajur Veda has nineteen Upanishads; and Atharva Veda has thirty-one Upanishads.

Further, the Vedas have many sub-vedas, known as the ‘Up-vedas’. The Rig Veda has the sub-veda known as ‘Ayurveda’ dealing with medicinal herbs; the Sama Veda has ‘Gandharvaveda’ dealing with the art of song and dance; the Yajur Veda has ‘Dhanurveda’ that deals with archery and the science of weapon and warfare; and Atharva Veda has ‘Artha shastra’ that deals with political science, governance and economy.]

छूटइ मल कि मलहि के धोएँ । घृत कि पाव कोइ बारि बिलोएँ ॥ ५ ॥
प्रेम भगति जल बिनु रघुराई । अभिअंतर मल कबहुँ न जाई ॥ ६ ॥

chūṭa'i mala ki malahi kē dhō'ēm̃. ghr̥ta ki pāva kō'i bāri bilō'ēm̃. 5.
prēma bhagati jala binu raghurā'ī. abhi'antara mala kabahum̃ na jā'ī. 6.

Can anyone clean a dirty surface by using dirty water?

Similarly, can anyone get clarified butter (known as ghee) by churning water? [Clarified butter is obtained by vigorously churning pure milk, and never from water.] (5)

In the same way oh Lord Ram, the Lord of the Raghus (raghurā'ī), without the water symbolised by the virtues of love and affection as well as devotion for you, it is never possible to cleanse the impurities and taints that mar the purity and holiness of one's inner-self (i.e. one's Atma, one's soul, which is pure consciousness)¹. (6)

[Note—¹In this context, refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 122.]

सोइ सर्बग्य तग्य सोइ पंडित । सोइ गुन गृह बिग्यान अखंडित ॥ ७ ॥
दच्छ सकल लच्छन जुत सोई । जाकेँ पद सरोज रति होई ॥ ८ ॥

sō'i sarbagya tagya sō'i paṇḍita. sō'i guna gr̥ha bigyāna akhaṇḍita. 7.
daccha sakala lacchana juta sō'ī. jākēṁ pada sarōja rati hō'ī. 8.

A person is considered to be the most sagacious, erudite, wise, learned and enlightened, as well as a treasury trove of all knowledge and wisdom, and most intelligent and prudent if that person has true and sincere affection for your (Lord Ram's) holy lotus-like feet*.

[*These two verses can be read in another way as follows: “A person who has true and sincere affection for Lord Ram's holy lotus-like feet is one who is regarded

as being most sagacious, erudite, wise, learned and enlightened, as well as being a treasury trove of all knowledge and wisdom, and as being most intelligent and prudent.”] (7-8)

दो०. नाथ एक बर मागउँ राम कृपा करि देहु ।
जन्म जन्म प्रभु पद कमल कबहुँ घटै जनि नेहु ॥ ४९ ॥

dōhā.

nātha ēka bara māga'um̐ rāma kṛpā kari dēhu.
janma janma prabhu pada kamala kabahum̐ ghaṭai jani nēhu. 49.

Sage Vasistha prayed to Lord Ram: ‘Oh Lord (nātha)! I ask for one boon (blessing) from thee, which prithe be gracious to grant me, and it is that I may have an abiding affection for thine august and holy lotus-like feet in all the births I have to take, an affection that would never diminish in any of my births.’¹ (Doha no. 49)

[Note—¹Refer also to: Ram Charit Manas, (a) Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precede Doha no. 24 (citizens of Ayodhya); (ii) Doha nos. 129 and 131 (sage Valmiki); (b) Aranya Kand, (iii) Chaupai line no. 26 that precedes Doha no. 11 (sage Sutikshan); (iv) Chaupai line nos. 10-11 that precede Doha no. 13 (sage Agastya).]

चौ०. अस कहि मुनि बसिष्ठ गृह आए । कृपासिंधु के मन अति भाए ॥ १ ॥
caupāī.

asa kahi muni basiṣṭa gr̥ha ā'ē. kṛpāsindhu kē mana ati bhā'ē. 1.

After offering his obeisance to Lord Ram, sage Vasistha came back to his home. The sage's politeness and humility immensely pleased the heart of the Lord who was an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness (kṛpāsindhu). (1)

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Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

Chapter 4

Stotras of Lord Ram from 'Adhyatma Ramayan' of sage Veda Vyas

In this Chapter we shall read the following sacred Stotras (Hymns) of Lord Ram from the Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas:--

- (4.1) 'Ram Hridaya' Stotra
- (4.2) Lord Ram's Stotra by Ahilya
- (4.3) Lord Ram's Stotra by sage Parashuram
- (4.4) Lord Ram's Stotra by sage Narad
- (4.5) Lord Ram's Stotra by sage Valmiki
- (4.6) Lord Ram's Stotra by sage Sutikshan
- (4.7) Lord Ram's Stotra by sage Agastya
- (4.8) Lord Ram's Stotra by Jatau
- (4.9) Lord Ram's Stotra by Gandharva
- (4.10) Lord Ram's Stotra by Sugriv
- (4.11) Lord Ram's Stotra by Swayam Prabha
- (4.12) Lord Ram's Stotra by Vibhishan
- (4.13) Lord Ram's Stotra by the Gods
- (4.14) Lord Ram's Stotra by Brahma
- (4.15) Lord Ram's Stotra by Indra
- (4.16) Lord Ram's Stotra by Lord Shiva

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(4.1) ‘Ram Hridaya’ Stotra

This hymn appears in the holy book ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ written by sage Veda Vyas, the legendary classifier of the Vedas and the Upanishads, and the author of the Purans.

It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan’s Baal Kand (Chapter 1), Canto (Sarga) 1, from verse nos. 1-2, and 7-24. It is in the form of Lord Ram’s praise that Lord Shiva used to honour the Lord when he was asked about who Lord Ram was by his divine consort Parvati, the Mother Goddess.

यः पृथ्वीभरवारणाय दिविजैः संप्रार्थितश्चिन्मयः संजातः पृथिवीतले रविकुले
मायामनुष्योऽव्ययः।

निश्चक्रं हतराक्षसः पुनरगाद् ब्रह्मत्वमाद्यं स्थिरां कीर्तिं पापहरां विधाय जगतां तं जानकीशं भजे॥१॥

yaḥ prthvībharavāraṇāya divijaiḥ samprārthitaścinmayah
sañjātaḥ prthivītale ravikule māyāmanuṣyo’vyayah /
niścakram hatarākṣasaḥ punaragād brahmatvamādyam sthirām
kīrtim pāpaharām vidhāya jagatām taṁ jānakīśam bhaje // 1 //

1. I worship and adore Lord Janki-Nath (Sri Ram, the Lord of Sita), the Lord who is omnipotent, omniscient and indestructible, who had manifested on the surface of this earth in the Sun-race with a human-like image (form with a body) at the behest of Gods to remove the burden of this earth, and who—having slayed (destroyed) the multitudes of (unrighteous, sinful and cruel) demons and having established his stable and steady stupendous fame and magnificent glories which are capable of destroying sins and their horrible effects—had once again merged (re-entered) in his original, eternal, absolute, transcendental form of the supreme ‘Brahm’ (who is formless, attributeless, unqualified, all-pervading, all-encompassing supreme Truth or absolute Reality in the creation) (1).

विश्वोद्भवस्थितिलयादिषु हेतुमेकं मायाश्रयं विगतमायमचिन्त्यमूर्तिम्।
आनन्दसान्द्रममलं निजबोधरूपं सीतापतिं विदिततत्त्वमहं नमामि॥२॥

viśvodbhavasthithilayādiṣu hetumekam
māyāśrayam vigatamāyamacintyamūrtim /
ānandasāndramamalam nijabodharūpaṁ
sītāpatiṁ viditatattvamahaṁ namāmi // 2 //

2. I bow my head reverentially (to pay obeisance) to Sitapati (Lord of Sita, i.e. Sri Ram) who is an expert in the knowledge of the essence and elementary principles of the supreme Truth and absolute Reality in creation, who is the only cause of the beginning, existence and annihilation of the universe, who is beyond Maya (the trap of ignorance ignited delusions and deceptions) inspite of being its abode or shelter

(because Maya has its origin in and is dependent on the supreme and transcendental Brahm who created it at the very beginning of creation), whose true form cannot be imagined and comprehended, who is a treasury (abode, centre, fount) of bliss, peace and tranquility, who has no attributes and epithets, no honours and titles (to define and describe him in any way), is without all faults, blemishes and reproach associated with this creation, and who is radiantly self-illuminated (2).

नमोऽस्तु ते देव जगन्निवास सर्वात्मदृक् त्वं परमेश्वरोऽसि ।
 पृच्छामि तत्त्वं पुरुषोत्तमस्य सनातनं त्वं च सनातनोऽसि ॥७॥
 गोप्यं यदतयन्तमनन्यवाच्यं वदन्ति भक्तेषु महानुभावाः ।
 तदप्यहोऽहं तव देव भक्ता प्रियोऽसि मे त्वं वद यत्तु पृष्टम् ॥८॥

pārvatīyuvāca

namo'stu te deva jagannivāsa sarvātmadr̥k tvam parameśvaro'si /
 pr̥cchāmi tattvam puruṣottamasya sanātanaṁ tvam ca sanātano'si // 7 //
 gopyaṁ yadatyantamananyavācyaṁ vadanti bhakteṣu mahānubhāvāḥ /
 tadapyaho'haṁ tava deva bhaktā priyo'si me tvam vada yattu pr̥ṣṭam
 // 8 //

7-8. Parvati (the goddess who is the divine consort of Lord Shiva and the Mother Goddess of this creation) addressed her divine husband Shiva and said, 'Oh Lord! Oh the abode (shelter) of the world! I bow before you with palms joined together in submission. You are a witness to the inner thoughts of all, and are the supreme Lord. I want to ask about the elementary, eternal and absolute truth about Sri Purushottam (literally, the best amongst the exalted males in creation) because you are also eternal and the truthful (7).

Great souls disclose to their ardent followers even the greatest of secrets (or subjects) which are not fit to be divulged to others. Oh Lord! I am also your devotee; you are most dear to me. Hence, describe all that I have asked you (8).

ज्ञानं सविज्ञानमथानुभक्तिवैराग्ययुक्तं च मितं विभास्वत् ।
 जानाम्यहं योषिदपि त्वदुक्तं यथा तथा ब्रूहि तरन्ति येन ॥९॥

jñānaṁ savijñānamathānubhaktivairāgyayuktaṁ ca mitaṁ vibhāsvat /
 jānāmyahaṁ yoṣidapi tvaduktaṁ yathā tathā brūhi taranti yena // 9 //

9. That sterling wisdom (or knowledge, erudition, awareness) which helps a person to cross over this (deluding, mundane) ocean-like world—a knowledge which is self-illuminating and self-radiant, which has devotion and renunciation as its integral characteristic, and which leads to self realisation—please narrate it to me in few words, using simple logic and language, so that I can easily understand and grasp it, inspite of my being a woman (who is not supposed to be so proficient in easily comprehending metaphysics and spiritual matters) (9).

पृच्छामि चान्यच्च परं रहस्यं तदेव चाग्रे वद वारिजाक्ष।
श्रीरामचन्द्रेऽखिललोकसारे भक्तिर्दृढा नौर्भवति प्रसिद्धा॥१०॥

pr̥cchāmi cānyacca paraṃ rahasyaṃ tadeva cāgre vada vārijākṣa /
śrīrāmacandre'khilalokasāre bhaktirdṛḍhā naurbhavati prasiddhā // 10//

10. Oh the lotus-eyed one (Lord Shiva)! I ask you about one most secret of mysteries; please describe it first. It is well established that pristine pure, true and uncorrupted devotion, dedication and submission for Sri Ram, who is the essence and soul of the entire creation, is like a strong and sturdy boat for crossing his ocean-like mundane world (10).

भक्तिः प्रसिद्धा भवमोक्षणाय नान्यत्ततः साधनमस्ति किञ्चित्।
तथापि हृत्संशयबन्धनं मे विभेतुमर्हस्यमलोक्तिभिस्त्वम्॥११॥
वदन्ति रामं परमेकमाद्यं निरस्तमायागुणसंप्रवाहम् ।
भजन्ति चाहर्निमिप्रमत्ताः परं पदं यान्ति तथैव सिद्धाः॥१२॥

bhaktiḥ prasiddhā bhavamokṣaṇāya nānyattataḥ sādhanamasti kiñcit /
tathāpi hr̥tsamśayabandhanaṃ me vibhettumarhasyamaloktibhistvam
// 11 //
vadanti rāmaṃ paramekamādyam nirastamāyāguṇasampravāham /
bhajanti cāharniśamapramattāḥ paraṃ padaṃ yānti tathaiva siddhāḥ
// 12 //

11. To free one's self from the shackles of this mundane, artificial and ensnaring world, sincere devotion for, honest submission to, and dedicated worship of the supreme Lord are the only famed and well established way; these are the medium or the instruments to achieve this aim. There is no better way to do it than this. In spite of that, I earnestly request you to cut and remove the knot of whatever doubts and confusions that might be present in my heart with your wise and enlightened words (11).

12. The Siddhas (mystics, experts) who are wise, erudite, enlightened and free of all misconceptions, who do not fall into the trap of hearsay and falsehoods, who know the essence and reality of the things as they stand, call Sri Ram the most exalted Supreme Being who is matchless, is without a second or parallel, is the primary cause of all that exists, and is beyond the attributes and characteristic 'Gunas' (qualities and virtues) associated with Nature. At the same time, these wise and enlightened ones (i.e. the Siddhas) attain the supreme state represented by the Lord's holy feet by worshipping, remembering and adoring him, by singing his divine glories and remaining ever engrossed in him day and night (12).

[Pravati essentially says that though on the one hand it is possible to attain emancipation and salvation by having devotion and submission for the Lord, if anyone has any trace of doubts in his mind it is better to get rid of it by listening to the

divine discourses, and the easiest way to achieve this end is to hear the divine story of the Lord, because pure and dry spiritual discourse may not be understandable by an ordinary person but when it is intermingled and said in the form of an interesting story, everyone will listen to it and the message and moral would be easy to grasp. On the other hand there are wise and erudite people who are well versed in spiritualism and metaphysics, but still they rely upon 'Bhakti', or having devotion and submission for the Lord as a means for attaining emancipation and salvation. She implies here that both these paths are valid and effective; a judicious mixture is needed to achieve the aim of final liberation and deliverance for the soul of the creature from the fetters that shackle it to the entrapping world.]

वदन्ति केचित्परमोऽपि रामः स्वाविद्यया संवृतमात्मसंज्ञम्।
जानाति नात्मानमतः परेण सम्बोधितो वेद परात्मतत्त्वम्॥१३॥

vadanti kecitparamo'pi rāmaḥ svāvidyayā saṁvṛtamātmasaṁjñam /
jānāti nātmānamataḥ pareṇa sambodhito veda parātmataṭṭvam // 13 //

13. But some say that despite being the supreme, absolute, all-knowing and omniscient Lord (Brahm), Sri Ram did not realise (i.e. became aware of) the nature of his 'true self' because of being covered (enveloped, encased, sheathed) by Maya which is his own delusion creating powers. That is why he had to listen to spiritual, metaphysical and theological discourses and teachings (of his Guru Vashistha and others wise teachers) in order to understand and realise the supreme irrefutable 'truth' about his own real self as propounded by the Vedas. (13).

यदि स्म जानाति कुतो विलापः सीताकृतेऽनेन कृतः परेण।
जानाति नैवं यदि केन सेव्यः समो हि सर्वैरपि जीवजातैः॥१४॥
अत्रोत्तरं किं विदितं भवद्विस्तद् ब्रूत मे संशयभेदि वाक्यम्॥१५॥

yadi sma jānāti kuto vilāpaḥ sītākṛte'nena kṛtaḥ pareṇa /
jānāti naivaṁ yadi kena sevyaḥ samo hi sarvairapi jīvajātaiḥ // 14 //
atrottaram kiṁ viditaṁ bhavadbhistadbrūta me saṁśayabhedi vākyaṁ
// 15 //

14-15. Hence, I want to know that if he was aware about the elementary truth of existence, the fundamental tenets of the scriptures, and the truthful, conscious and real nature of the pure-self, why then did he woefully lament for Sita so much? And if he was not a wise, enlightened, self-realised and attained soul, then he was like other ordinary, mortal beings. Why then should he be worshipped, adored and honoured? What is your view (opinion) in this matter, please tell me in a language consisting of simple words so that my doubts and confusions are dispelled' (14-15).

धन्यासि भक्तासि परात्मनस्त्वं यज्ज्ञातुमिच्छा तव रामतत्त्वम्।

पुरा न केनाप्यभिचोदितोऽहं वक्तुं रहस्यं परमं निगूढम् ।१६॥

śrīmahādeva uvāca

dhanyāsi bhaktāsi parātmanastvaṃ yajjñātumicchā tava rāmatattvam /
purā na kenāpyabhicodito'haṃ vaktuṃ rahasyaṃ paramaṃ nigūḍham
// 16 //

16. Lord Shiva replied, 'Oh Goddess! You are the blessed one. You are a great devotee of the supreme, absolute, transcendental Lord that you wish to know about the essential or elementary truth about the true nature of Sri Ram. Before this, no one had asked me to describe his most difficult and mysterious but sacred secret (16).

त्वयाद्य भक्त्या परिनोदितोऽहं वक्ष्ये नमस्कृत्य रघूत्तमं ते ।
रामः परात्मा प्रकृतेरनादिरानन्द एकः पुरुषोत्तमो हि ।१७॥

tvayādyā bhaktyā parinodito'haṃ vakṣye namaskṛtya raghūttamaṃ te /
rāmaḥ parātmā prakṛteranādirānanda ekaḥ puruṣottamo hi // 17 //

17. Today you have earnestly asked me with due reverence and eagerness in your heart. Hence, I shall answer your questions after praying and paying obeisance to Sri Ram (who is the best in the clan of Raghu). Sri Ram is without doubt beyond Nature, is without a beginning, is an abode/treasury of bliss, peace and tranquility, is matchless and peerless, and is the best and most supreme, exalted, absolute transcendental Lord (who had manifested himself as the best human that ever existed on this earth) (17).

स्वमायया कृत्स्नमिदं हि सृष्ट्वा नभोवदन्तर्बहिरास्थितो यः ।
सर्वान्तरस्थोऽपि निगूढ आत्मा स्वामायया सृष्टमिदं विचष्टे ।१८॥

svamāyayā kṛtsnamidaṃ hi sṛṣṭvā nabhavadantarbahirāsthito yaḥ /
sarvāntarastho'pi nigūḍha ātmā svāmāyayā sṛṣṭamidaṃ vicaṣṭe //

18. He has created this world out of his own Maya (power of creating delusions; cosmic creative energy) and is present inside and outside of it like the sky (or space, void—i.e. he encompasses everything, he is uniformly diffused in everything, he soaks everything that ever existed and that would ever exist, and he is inherently and integrally present inside as well as outside of it much like the sky or space that is present inside a pitcher as well as outside of it as nothing exists outside the element known as space or sky; even the planets, stars and the galaxies of the cosmos are embedded in the void of the sky). He lives inside all creatures in the form of a microcosmic soul or Atma from where he governs (i.e. controls, regulates, commands, activates and keeps on the move, administers) this world (18).

जगन्ति नित्यं परितो भ्रमन्ति यत्सन्निधौ चुम्बकलोहवद्धि।
एतन्न जानन्ति विमूढचित्ताः स्वाविद्यया संवृतमानसा ये॥१९॥

jaganti nityaṃ parito bhramanti yatsannidhau cumbakalohavaddhi /
etanna jānanti vimūḍhacittāḥ svāvidyayā saṁvṛtamānasā ye // 19 //

19. Even as an inert and lifeless piece of iron becomes active (starts moving and showing powers of attracting other iron pieces) when in contact with, or simply being in the vicinity of a magnet, so do this world always moves around (roams, wanders about) endlessly and aimlessly by the mere wish (or influence) of his (delusion creating) powers called Maya. Those idiots or ignorant ones whose hearts (emotions and thoughts; the nature, inherent temperaments and inclinations of a creature that influences the mind and intellect) are covered by a sheath of ignorance (induced by delusions), do not recognise that supreme, absolute, transcendental Soul called 'Ram' (19).

स्वाज्ञानमप्यात्मनि शुद्धबुद्धे स्वरोपयन्तीह निरस्तमाये।
संसारमेवानुसरन्ति ते वै पुत्रादिसक्ताः पुरुकर्मयुक्ताः॥२०॥

svājñānamapyātmāni śuddhabuddhe svāropayantiha nirastamāye /
saṁsāramevānuseranti te vai putrādisaktāḥ purukarmayuktāḥ // 20 //

20. Those fools and ignorant ones (refer verse 19) impose their ignorance and stupidity even on the Lord who is beyond delusions, and who is most pure and most wise (i.e. they consider him to be as ignorant and stupid as themselves). Such lowly fools who always remain engrossed in the thoughts of and are infatuated by their wives and worry about their sons (i.e. they are shackled to worldly ties), remain busy and entangled in various worldly deeds, as a result of which they always remain dumped in the cycle of birth and death in this mundane, artificial, deluding world (20).

जानन्ति नैवं हृदये स्थितं वै चामीकरं कण्ठगतं यथाज्ञाः।
यथाप्रकाशो न तु विद्यते रवौ ज्योतिःस्वभावे परमेश्वरे तथा।
विशुद्धविज्ञानघने रघूत्तमेऽविद्याकथं स्यात्परतः परात्मनि॥२१॥

jānanti naiva hrdaye sthitam vai cāmīkaram kaṇṭhagataṃ yathājñā /
yathāprakāśo na tu vidyate ravau jyotiḥsvabhāve paramēśvare tathā /
viśuddhavijñānaghane raghūttame'vidyā katham syātparataḥ parātmāni
// 21 //

21. Those ignorant and stupid fools do not recognise the supreme Soul called 'Ram' who resides in their heart even as they are not aware of the wooden girdle of beads lying around their necks (which is why they cast slander and doubt on the Lord). As a matter of fact, like darkness cannot exist inside the sun, ignorance too cannot survive

or live inside (or in the presence of, or with reference to) the most exalted, supreme and absolute Lord called Parmeshwar, who is none other than the most exalted and supreme Soul (Parmatma) called Sri Ram who has manifested himself as the one who is the best in king Raghu's clan. Lord Ram is therefore beyond Nature; he is a treasury or an abode of the most pure form of knowledge, and is an embodiment of enlightenment and wisdom (21).

यथा हि चाक्ष्णा भ्रमता गृहादिकं विनष्टदृष्टेर्भ्रमतीव दृश्यते।
तथैव देहेन्द्रियकर्तुरात्मनः कृते परेऽध्यस्य जनो विमुह्यति॥२२॥

yathā hi cākṣṇā bhramatā gṛhādikaṃ vinaṣṭadrṣṭerbhramatīva dṛśyate /
tathaiva dehendriyakarturātmanaḥ kṛte pare'dhyasya jano vimuhyati //

22. Even as the walls of a room and other objects seem to go round and round in circles in front of the eyes when one spins around, the people similarly accuse the Atma (soul) for the good or bad effects of deeds done by their bodies and sense organs, and thereby get trapped in a vortex of illusions. [The man thinks that the room and its objects are turning in circles whereas they are rock steady; the deluded mind is also misled to think that the Atma or soul is doing some deed and is therefore responsible for its fruits or rewards. The fact is quite the contrary.] (22).

नाहो न रात्रिः सवितुर्यथा भवेत् प्रकाशरूपाव्यभिचारतः क्वचित्।
ज्ञानं तथाज्ञानमिदं द्वयं हरौ रामे कथं स्थास्यति शुद्धचिद्धने॥२३॥

nāho na rātriḥ savituryathā bhavet prakāśarūpāvyabhicārataḥ kvacit /
jñānaṃ tathājñānamidaṃ dvayaṃ harau rāme katham sthāsyati
śuddhacidghane // 23 //

23. Even as the dazzling splendour, brilliant radiance and bright illumination of the Sun are inherent and integral to it and no external factors, such as the arrival of the night or the dawn of the day can really effect it or are responsible for it, for the Sun remains uniformly illuminated notwithstanding whether it is day or night, say, how can both 'Gyan' (light of knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment) and 'Agyan' (darkness of ignorance, stupidity, illusions and doubts) live or exist simultaneously in Sri Ram who is the treasure or fount of pure consciousness. [Here, Lord Ram is compared to the Sun, Gyan to the day, and Agyan to the night.] (23).

तस्मात्परानन्दमये रघूत्तमे विज्ञानरूपे हि न विद्यते तमः।
अज्ञानसाक्षिण्यरविन्दलोचने मायाश्रयत्वान्न हि मोहकारणम्॥२४॥

tasmātparānandamaye raghūttame vijñānarūpe hi na vidyate tamaḥ /
ajñānasākṣiṇyaravindalocane māyāśrayatvānna hi mohakāraṇam // 24 //

24. Hence, there is not even a fraction (i.e. an iota) of ignorance, confusion or doubt in Sri Ram who is an embodiment of supreme bliss, peace and tranquility, who is a treasury of enlightenment and true knowledge, who is a mere neutral and uninterested witness to the existence of ignorance, and who is lotus-eyed. Since he is the creator (and therefore the Lord) of Maya (delusions, illusions caused by ignorance), the latter cannot attract, entice, delude, trap and overcome him (24).’

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(4.2) Lord Ram’s Stotra by Ahilya

This hymn appears in the holy book ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan’s Baal Kand (Chapter 2), Canto (Sarga) 5, from verse nos. 43-62. Ahilya was the wife of sage Gautam; she was turned into a stone when the sage cursed her due to some misunderstanding. When the sage realised the reality he blessed her that when Lord Vishnu would come down to earth in the incarnation of Lord Ram, he would come to her and touch her form as a stone with his feet. This touch would free her of the curse, and she will then be able to come back to heaven.

So, when Ahilya found her liberation from this curse and deliverance from the body of a stone, she was extremely happy, and prayed to Lord Ram in the following hymn—

अहल्योवाच
अहो कृतार्थास्मि जगन्निवास ते पादाब्जसंलग्नरजः कणादहम्।
स्पृशामि यत्पद्मजशङ्करादिभिर्विमृग्यते रन्धितमानसैः सदा॥४३॥

ahalyovāca

aho krtārthāsmi jagannivāsa te pādābjasaṁlagnarajaḥkaṇādaham /
sprśāmi yatpadmajaśaṅkarādibhirvimṛgyate randhitamānasaiḥ sadā
// 43 //

43. Ahilya said, 'Oh the abode (refuge, shelter) of this whole world (creation)! I have become highly obliged, fortunate and privileged by having got the touch of the dust of your feet. Oh! It is a matter of great luck that I am touching those holy feet of yours which are the subject matter of constant meditation, contemplation and enquiry by Lords Brahma (the creator of creation) and Shiva (the concluder of creation) themselves (43).

अहो विचित्रं तव राम चेष्टितं मनुष्यभावेन विमोहितं जगत्।
चलस्यजस्रं चरणादिवर्जितः सम्पूर्ण आनन्दमयोऽतिमायिकः॥४४॥

aho vicitraṃ tava rāma ceṣṭitaṃ manuṣyabhāvena vimohitaṃ jagat /
calasyajasraṃ caraṇādivarjitaḥ sampūrṇa ānandamayo'timāyikaḥ // 44 //

44. Oh Sri Ram! Your maverick sports and deceptive playful activities are very mysteries and strange; the whole world is in thrall and under the deluding spell of your human-like behaviour. You are an embodiment of complete bliss, peace and tranquility, and are empowered with the illusion-creating, magical powers, because inspite of being without a feet, you always keep on moving (44).

यत्पादपङ्कजपरागपवित्रगात्रा भागीरथी भवविरिञ्चिमुखान्नुनाति ।
साक्षात्स एव मम दृग्विषयो यदास्ते किं वर्ण्यते मम पुराकृतभागधेयम् ॥४५॥

yatpādapaṅkajaparāgapavitragātrā bhāgīrathī bhavaviriñcimukhānpunāti /
sākṣātsa eva mama dṛgviṣayo yadāste kiṃ varṇyate mama
purākṛtabhāgadheyam // 45 //

45. He, the nectar of whose holy feet purifies (or endows with purity, sanctity, holiness, sacredness) the waters of river Ganges (Bhagirathi) which in turn becomes potent enough to purify (or make holy, endow with divinity and sacredness) even Shiva, Brahma and other Lords of the universe—today the same holy and divine feet have become the object (of adoration and reverential viewing) of my eyes. (I feel so honoured, obliged, privileged and exhilarated that) I do not know how to describe my past good deeds (and their good effects)? (45).

मर्त्यावतारे मनुजाकृतिं हरिं रामाभिधेयं रमणीयदेहिनम् ।
धनुर्धरं पङ्कजालोचनं भजामि नित्यं न परान्भजिष्ये ॥४६॥

martyāvatāre manuṣjākṛtiṃ hariṃ rāmābhidheyam ramaṇīyadehinam /
dhanurdharam padmaviśālalocanam bhajāmi nityam na parānbhajiṣye
// 46 //

46. I worship and constantly remember or meditate upon Sri Ram who holds a bow, is lotus-eyed, and is the supreme Lord Hari (Vishnu) who has incarnated (revealed) himself in a human form in this mortal world. Except him, I do not wish to worship, adore, honour or meditate upon anyone else (46).

यत्पादपङ्कजरजः श्रुतिभिर्विमृग्यं यन्नाभिपङ्कजभवः कमलासनश्च ।
यन्नामसाररसिको भगवान्पुरारिस्तं रामचन्द्रमनिशं हृदि भावयामि ॥४७॥

yatpādapañkajarajaḥ śrutibhirvimrgyaṃ yannābhipaṅkajabhavaḥ
kamalāsanaśca /
yannāmasārarasiko bhagavānpurāristaṃ rāmacandramanīśaṃ hr̥di
bhāvayāmi // 47 //

47. I contemplate and meditate upon Sri Ram, the dust of whose lotus-like feet are much sought after even by the Vedas. Even Brahma has manifested himself from the lotus emerging from his navel, and Lord Shiva is intoxicated by, and is an admirer of, the nectar of his holy name (47).

यस्यावतारचरितानि विरिञ्चिलोके गायन्ति नारदमुखा भवपद्मजाद्याः
आनन्दजाश्रुपरिषिक्तकुचागसीमा वागीश्वरी च तमहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥४८॥

yasyāvatāracaritāni viriñciloke gāyanti nāradamukhā bhavapadmajādyāḥ /
ānandajāśrupariṣiktakucāgrasīmā vāgīśvarī ca tamahaṃ śaraṇaṃ prapadye
// 48 //

48. I take refuge (shelter) in the holy feet of the Lord. The worldly activities (i.e. playful sports) which he undertook during his incarnation are being constantly sung and lauded in the heavens by sage Narad and other celestial sages, Lords Brahma, Shiva and other Lords of Gods, as well as by Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge and wisdom) whose bosom is wet by tears of exhilaration, extreme joy and bliss flowing down from her eyes (48).

सोऽयं परात्मा पुरुषः पुराण एकः स्वयंज्योतिरनन्त आद्यः।
मायातनुं लोकविमोहनीयां धत्ते परानुग्रह एष रामः ॥४९॥

so'yaṃ parātmā puruṣaḥ purāṇā ekaḥ svayaṁjyotirananta ādyaḥ /
māyātanuṃ lokavimohaniyāṃ dhatte parānugraha eṣa rāmaḥ // 49 //

49. That supreme, transcendental Lord, who is one and the only one, who is famed in the Purans as the self-illuminated, eternal and infinite ancient one who was there even at the beginning of creation, has assumed an illusionary human form, using his own delusion creating maverick powers called Maya, to show his profound graciousness, munificence, magnanimity, benediction and benevolence on this world. This human form of the Lord is most captivating, enthralling, charming and pleasant, so much so that it holds the entire world in its thrall and keeps it spellbound (49).

[The Lord decided to oblige his devotees by taking a birth so that they can sing his divine deeds and stories associated with him, and though they may not be enough intellectually evolved to understand the Vedas and other scriptures and obtain liberation and deliverance from this entrapping world of birth and death, they will still have the same benefit by singing his glories as Ram. Again, the Lord would be able to fulfill the desires of those devotees who wish to see him in a visible form that they can worship and adore. Further, the Lord would use this opportunity to preach the

glories tenets of the scriptures himself, as is evident with this particular Ramayan which is packed with spiritual wisdom and philosophy. Simultaneously, the Lord wished to set practical guidelines for day to day behaviour of creatures in the world, which he could do only if he became one like them and lived with them, suffering and enjoying the horrors and comforts of the world like them. Then he would be able to show them in practical terms how to act and behave in similar situations. But, since he is an embodiment of, a personification of the supreme Brahm, he would not at all be affected and tarnished by this birth as a human.

He made himself so bewitchingly beautiful to ensure that the mortal creatures, who are so enamoured by physical beauty, would at least look up at him, pay attention to him, and keep looking at him so much so that in due course of time they begin to treat him as their idol of admiration and icon of worship. The whole exercise would have failed miserably if the Lord had assumed an ugly form that all loathed to see and to talk with, what to emulate and remember.]

अयं हि विश्वोद्भवसंयमानामेकः स्वमायागुणविम्बितो यः।
विरिञ्चिविष्ण्वीश्वरनामभेदान् धत्ते स्वतन्त्रः परिपूर्ण आत्मा ॥५०॥

ayaṃ hi viśvodbhavasamānamāmekah svamāyāguṇabimbīto yaḥ /
viriñciviṣṇvīśvaranāmabhedān dhatte svatantraḥ paripūrṇa ātmā // 50 //

50. You are the independent, all-complete and self-sustained supreme Soul of creation (known as Brahm) which assumes different forms of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva with the help of its own stupendous powers of creation called Maya, along with its various virtues and qualities called ‘Gunas’, for the express purpose of creation, sustenance and dissolution of this creation respectively (50).

नमोऽस्तु ते राम तवाङ्घ्रिपङ्कजं श्रिया धृतं वक्षसि ललितं प्रियात्।
आक्रान्तमेकेन जगत्त्रयं पुरा ध्येयं मुनीन्द्रैरभिमानवर्जितैः ॥५१॥

namo’stu te rāma tavāṅghripaṅkajaṃ śriyā dhṛtaṃ vakṣasi lālitaṃ priyāt /
ākrāntamekena jagattrayaṃ purā dhyeyaṃ munīndhairabhimānavarjitaiḥ
// 51 //

51. Oh Sri Ram! I bow and pay my obeisance to your holy lotus-feet which are affectionately served and adored by Laxmi by keeping them on her bosom, which had in an earlier time (during the dwarf mendicant incarnation to vanquish Vaali) measured the three worlds called the ‘Triloki’ (meaning the terrestrial, celestial and subterranean worlds) by a single step, and which are constantly meditated upon by wise and enlightened sages, hermits and seers (51).

जगतामादिभूतस्त्वं जगत्त्वं जगदाश्रयः। सर्वभूतेष्वसंयुक्त एको भाति भवान्परः ॥५२॥

jagatāmādhībhūtastvaṃ jagattvaṃ jagadāśrayaḥ /
sarvabhūteṣvasaṃyukta eko bhāti bhavānparaḥ // 52 //

52. Oh Lord! You are the primordial cause of, the embodiment of, and the only shelter of the world. The entire creation made up of the 'Bhuts' (the primary elements of creation, such as earth, water, fire, air and space) is incorporated in your macrocosmic form. In spite of that, you are distinct and independent from all the creatures, and are radiant with the divine glow of the matchless supreme Brahman of whom you are an embodiment (52).

ओंकारवाच्यस्त्वं राम वाचामविषयः पुमान्। वाच्यावाचकभेदेन भवानेव जगन्मयः॥५३॥

omkāravācyastvaṃ rāma vācāmaviṣayaḥ pumān /
vācyavācakabhedenā bhavāneva jaganmayaḥ // 53 //

53. Oh Sri Ram! You are the eternal and imperishable word represented by the divine word 'OM', and are the invisible, un-manifest supreme Purush (macrocosmic soul) which is beyond the purview of the faculty of speech (i.e. speech cannot define and describe you in any way). Even as the same word has many interpretations and uses, you too have assumed the form of this entire world depending upon how it is perceived. [That is, like the word having different meanings and usage, the same entity known as Brahman has been known in different ways by different persons. This has resulted in so much dichotomy and schisms in this world. But upon close examination one finds that the essence is the same and one even as the same word, when applied in different context, assumes a different meaning.] (53).

कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वफलसाधनभेदतः। एको विभासि राम त्वं मायया बहुरूपया॥५४॥

kāryakāraṇakartṛtvaphalasādhanaabhedataḥ /
eko vibhāsi rāma tvam māyayā bahurūpayā // 54 //

54. Oh Sri Ram! You yourself manifest (i.e. appear, reveal) in multifarious forms with the help (aid, use) of your multi-faceted, powerful, mystical and maverick powers called Maya, creating or doing various deeds, becoming reasons/causes for those duties/imperatives/obligations, their results/rewards/fruits as well as resources/aids/instruments required to fulfill them or carry them out (54).

त्वन्मायामोहितधियस्त्वां न जानन्ति तत्त्वतः। मानुषं त्वाभिमन्यन्ते मायिनं परमेश्वरम्॥५५॥

tvanmāyāmohitadhiyastvāṃ na jānanti tattvataḥ /
mānuṣaṃ tvābhimanyante māyinaṃ paramēśvaram // 55 //

55. Those people whose mind, intellect and discriminatory faculties are held in thrall by your deluding and magical powers can never realise (or come to know) their real, truthful nature and form. Those idiots and block-heads think that you—who are the Lord of all delusions and are the supreme Soul and Lord of creation—are an ordinary human being (55).

आकाशवत्त्वं सर्वत्र बहिरन्तर्गतोऽमलः। असङ्गो ह्यचलो नित्यः शुद्धो बुद्धः सदव्ययः॥५६॥

ākāśavattvaṃ sarvatra bahirantargato'malaḥ /
asaṅgo hyacalo nityaḥ śuddho buddhaḥ sadavyayaḥ // 56 //

56. You are present both inside and outside of everything like the space or sky that covers everything from the outside and is present inside it as well. You are pristine pure, immaculate, uncorrupt, and without any blemishes and faults. You are all alone, remain detached, dispassionate and disinterested in any thing associated with this illusionary world. You are unwavering, steadfast, stable, unmoving, constant and uniform. You are eternal, infinite, and without a beginning or an end. You are most pure and holy, are wise and acclaimed, are self-realised and an attained one. You are an embodiment, a personification, an image of truth. You are imperishable and unchanging (56).

योषिन्मूढाहमज्ञा ते तत्त्वं जाने कथं विभो। तस्मात्ते शतशो राम नमस्कुर्यामनन्यधीः॥५७॥

yoṣinmūḍhāhamajñā te tattvaṃ jāne kathaṃ vibho /
tasmātte śataśo rāma namaskuryāmananyadhīḥ // 57 //

57. Oh Vibho (omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal, omnipotent Lord)! What do I know of, or how can I understand the essential form and nature of yours that is divine, transcendental, supreme, pure, ethereal, eclectic, sublime and esoteric, because I am an ignorant and a dud woman? Hence, Oh Sri Ram, I can only bow my head in reverence and adoration, to pay my humble obeisance and to worship you, hundreds of times with the highest and the most sincere of devotion, humility, dedication and submission for you that I can command (57).

देव मे यत्र कुत्रापि स्थिताया अपि सर्वदा। त्वत्पादकमले सक्ता भक्तिरेव सदास्तु मे॥५८॥

deva me yatra kutrāpi sthitāyā api sarvadā /
tvatpādakamale saktā bhaktireva sadāstu me // 58 //

58. Oh Lord! Wherever I stay, let me have eternal and sincere dedication, firm faith, steady admiration and unflinching devotion in your lotus-like feet (58).

नमस्ते पुरुषाध्यक्ष नमस्ते भक्तवत्सल । नमस्तेऽस्तु हृषीकेश नारायण नमोऽस्तु ते ॥५९॥

namaste puruṣādhyakṣa namaste bhaktavatsala /
namaste'stu hrīṣīkeśa nārāyaṇa namo'stute // 59 //

59. Oh the master or Lord of men! I bow before you. Oh the lover and benefactor of devotees! I bow my head before you with palms joined together in submission. Oh Hrishikesh (Vishnu)! I bow before you. Oh Narayan (Vishnu)! I bow my head repeatedly before you (59).

भवभयहरमेकं भानुकोटिप्रकाशं करधृतशरचापं कालमेघावभासम् ।
कनकरुचिरवस्त्रं रत्नवत्कुण्डलाढ्यं कमल विशदनेत्रं सानुजंराममीडे ॥६०॥

bhavabhayaharamekaṃ bhānukotiṭprakāśaṃ
karadhṛtaśaracāpaṃ kālameghāvabhāsaṃ/
kanakaruciravastraṃ ratnavatkuṇḍalāḍhyaṃ
kamalaviśadanetraṃ sānujaṃrāmamīḍe // 60 //

60. I sing the praises, honours and glories of Sri Ram– along with his younger brother Laxman– who is the only one to remove the fears of this world, is splendid and brilliant like crores (millions) of suns, who bears a bow and an arrow in his lotus-like hands, has a dark radiant complexion that resembles the dark clouds that are rich with rain, is wearing a magnificent yellow garment (robe) which is coloured like gold, is adorned by ear-rings studded with jewels and gems, and who has beautiful, enchanting broad eyes which are like the petals of a lotus flower' (60).

स्तुत्वैवं पुरुषं साक्षाद्राघवं पुरतः स्थितम् । परिक्रम्य प्रणम्याशु सानुजाता ययौ पतिम् ॥६१॥

stutvaivaṃ puruṣaṃ sākṣādrāghavaṃ purataḥ sthitam /
parikramya praṇamyāśu sānujñātā yayau patim // 61 //

61. In this manner, she (Ahilya) sang the divine and holy glories, honours and praises of the supreme Purush (a reference to Lord Vishnu or the Viraat Purush) in the form of Raghav (Lord Ram) himself standing in front of her, went around him (circumambulated him), praised and honoured him, and then took his permission to go to her husband's (Gautam's) place (61).

अहल्यया कृतं स्तोत्रं यः पठेद्भक्तिसंयुतः । स मुच्यतेऽखिलैः पापैः परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति ॥६२॥

ahalyayā kṛtaṃ stotraṃ yaḥ paṭhedbhaktisaṃyutaḥ /
sa mucyate'khilaiḥ pāpaiḥ paraṃ brahmādhigacchati // 62 //

62. Those people who read this Stotra (sacred hymns sung in honour of the Lord God), composed and sung by Ahilya, shall be liberated (freed) from all their sins (and their effects) and attain the most exalted stature of oneness with the Lord (or attain emancipation and salvation of their souls) (62).'

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(4.3) Lord Ram's Stotra by sage Parashuram

This hymn appears in the holy book 'Adhyatma Ramayan' written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan's Baal Kand (Chapter 1), Canto (Sarga) 7, from verse nos. 29-49.

Sage Parashuram was a great devotee of Lord Shiva. So when he heard that Shiva's bow was broken by Lord Ram to fulfill the condition set by Sita's father, king of Janakpur, the sage became extremely infuriated. He came rushing to the venue to punish Sri Ram, but in due course discovered that the latter was not an ordinary human being but the Supreme Lord Vishnu himself in this form. Vishnu had taken this form to fulfill his promises made to the Gods and mother Earth that he would come down and kill the cruel demons headed by Ravana, their 10-headed king.

So, the sage relented and asked the Lord for forgiveness. It was then that Parshuram said this hymn in honour of Lord Ram—

स एव विष्णुस्त्वं राम जातोऽसि ब्रह्मणार्थितः। मयि स्थितं तु त्वत्तेजस्त्वयैव पुनराहृतम् ॥२९॥

sa eva viṣṇustvaṃ rāma jāto'si brahmaṇārthitaḥ /
mayi sthitaṃ tu tvattejastvayaiva punarāhṛtam // 29 //

29. 'Oh Sri Ram! You are the same Vishnu. You have taken birth on the prayers of Brahma. Your immense powers which were vested in me till now have been taken back by you today (29).

अद्य मे सफलं जन्म प्रतीतोऽसि मम प्रभो। ब्रह्मादिभिरलभ्यस्त्वं प्रकृतेः पारगो मतः ॥३०॥

adya me saphalaṃ janma pratīto'si mama prabho /
brahmāḍibhiralabhyastvaṃ prakṛteḥ pārago mataḥ // 30 //

30. Today, I consider my life as worthy and successful (i.e. I feel extremely fortunate and privileged) that I have recognised you (as Lord Vishnu in your current form as Ram), more so because you are regarded as being inaccessible to even the creator Brahma and other exalted ones, as well as are beyond 'Nature' (30).

त्वयि जन्मादिषड्भावा न सन्त्यज्ञानसंभवाः। निर्विकारोऽसि पूर्णस्त्वं गमनादिविवर्जितः॥३१॥

tyayi janmādiṣaḍbhāvā na santyajñānasambhavāḥ /
nirvikāro'si pūrṇastvaṃ gamanādivivarjitaḥ // 31 //

31. You do not have ignorance-induced six faulty delusions, such as birth etc., which form an integral part of this creation. At the same time, you are free from wandering in the cycle of birth and death (or literally, the journey in various wombs as a mortal creature who has to repeatedly take birth due to its ignorance and the effects of the deeds done by it). You are faultless, changeless and complete in all respects (31).

यथा जले फेनजालं घूमौ वह्नौ यथा त्वयि। त्वदाधारा त्वद्विषया माया कार्यं सृजत्यहो॥३२॥

yathā jale phenajālaṃ dhūmo vahnau tathā tyayi /
tvadādhārā tvadviṣayā māyā kāryaṃ sṛjatyaho // 32 //

32. Ah! Maya (delusions in this creation), which is dependent on you and which has you as its subject (in the sense that it prevents creatures from knowing the truth about you and your true form by keeping them deluded, but allows those upon whom you are pleased to learn the truth about you), creates various types of strange and mysterious worldly deeds and entanglements which are like foam in water and smoke from the fire (32).

यावन्मायावृता लोकास्तावत्त्वां न विजानते। अविचारितसिद्धैषाविद्या विद्याविरोधिनी॥३३॥

yāvanmāyāvṛtā lokāstāvattvāṃ na vijānate /
avicāritasiddhaiṣāvidyā vidyāvirodhinī // 33 //

33. As long as a person is covered by (i.e. sheathed, engulfed, enveloped, surrounded, entangled by, under the spell of) Maya, he cannot realise (understand, recognise) you and your true form. This ignorance and lack of truthful knowledge or dearth of self realisation, which is inimical (opposed) to knowledge, wisdom, erudition, enlightenment and realisation, exists only till the time no thought is given to it (that Maya is casting a net to trap the creature and keep it bound in shackles of ignorance like a slave unaware of his legal rights) (33).

अविद्याकृतदेहादिसङ्घाते प्रतिबिम्बिता। चिच्छक्तिर्जीवलोकेऽस्मिन् जीव इत्यभिधीयते॥३४॥

avidyākṛtadehādisaṅghāte pratibimbītā /
cicchaktirjīvaloke'smin jīva ityabhidhīyate // 34 //

34. The reflection of the pure eternal consciousness obtained in the gross components of this mortal creation, such as in the body along with its bundle of other illusionary components, is mistakenly called a 'Jiva' (creature, an entity having life) in this mundane world. [In other words, the gross and perishable body which shows apparent signs of life because of the consciousness called Atma present inside it, is erroneously thought to be conscious itself, whereas the fact is on the contrary. So the body and other components of the creation, such as the mind and intellect, which exhibit signs of life, are called Jive or a living being.] This misconception is due to ignorance (34).

यावद्देहमनःप्राणबुद्ध्यादिष्वभिमानवान् । तावत्कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वसुखदुःखादिभागभवेत् ॥३५॥

yāvaddehamanaḥprāṇabuddhyādiṣvabhimānavān /
tāvatkartṛtvabhoktṛtvasukhaduḥkhādibhāgbhavet // 35 //

35. The Jiva (living being) undergoes sorrows and happiness, the feeling of being a doer of deeds and therefore an enjoyer or a sufferer from its deeds or actions only till the time it has pride and ego associated with its body, with the powers of its mind and intellect, with the stamina, strength, vitality and vigour that the life-force called Pran gives to it, along with the stupendous powers and potentials that its intelligence and wisdom bestows upon it (35).

आत्मनःसंसृतिर्नास्ति बुद्धेर्ज्ञानं न जात्विति । अविवेकाद्द्वयं युङ्क्त्वा संसारीति प्रवर्तते ॥३६॥

ātmanaḥ saṁsṛtirnāsti buddherjñānaṁ na jātviti /
avivekāddvyayaṁ yuñktvā saṁsārīti pravartate // 36//

36. In reality, the Atma (microcosmic soul of the Jiva) has no relevance to the fictitious world of birth and death, while the mind, acting independently, does not have the discriminatory powers of the intellect leading to wisdom, enlightenment and attainment or realisation of true knowledge of the 'self' (which is beyond logic and debates). Out of delusions and ignorance of the heart, the Jiva (creature) considers itself as 'belonging to this world', and consequentially indulges in various deeds and actions pertaining to the gross world (36).

जडस्य चित्समायोगाच्चित्तं भूयाच्चित्तेस्तथा । जडसङ्गाज्जडत्वं हि जलाग्नयोर्मेलनं यथा ॥३७॥

jaḍasya citsamāyogāccittvaṁ bhūyāccitestathā /
jaḍasaṅgājjāḍatvaṁ hi jalāgnyormelanaṁ yathā // 37 //

37. Even as contact between water and fire results in the former being influenced by the latter and vice versa, that is to say the water getting heated and the latter getting cooled, contact (i.e. union, interaction) between the inanimate (i.e. the mind-intellect)

and the animate (i.e. the Atma, soul) results in the former getting affected (influenced) by the latter and vice-versa. That is, since the Atma residing inside the body of an ignorance driven creature has to interact with the outside world through the medium of the mind, it is erroneously led to think that it is doing such and such deed through the means of the body and is therefore the ‘doer’ of deeds and therefore also the one who enjoys and suffers from them. Similarly, the mind, being in close contact with the Atma during this intercourse, also mislead to think that it is the enlightened and wise conscious factor in the body of a creature. Both appear to have acquired the characters of the other (37).

यावत्त्वत्पादभक्तानां सङ्गसौख्यं न विन्दति। तावत्संसारदुःखौघात् निवर्तेन्नरः सदा॥३८॥

yāvattvatpādabhaktānāṃ saṅgasaukhyam na vindati /
tāvatsaṁsāraduḥkhaughāṇna nivartennaraḥ sadā // 38 //

38. Till the time a person does not enjoy a constant company of those who are devoted to your lotus-like holy feet, he cannot get over the bundles of worldly sorrows, troubles, miseries and tribulations (38).

तत्सङ्गलब्धया भक्त्या यदा त्वां समुपासते। तदा माया शनैर्याति तानवं प्रतिपद्यते॥३९॥

tatsaṅgalabdhayā bhaktyā yadā tvāṁ samupāsate /
tadā māyā śanairyāti tānavam pratipadyate // 39 //

39. When he starts to worship you with devotion, faith and dedication, which he has gradually acquired (imbibed) by constant, persistent, sincere and diligent contact with your ardent devotees, this Maya (delusions, ignorance) of yours, gradually, bit by bit, leaves him, and it becomes weak and ineffective over a period of time (39).

ततस्त्वज्ज्ञानसम्पन्नः सद्गुरुस्तेन लभ्यते। वाक्याज्ञानं गुरोर्लब्ध्वा त्वत्प्रसादाद्विमुच्यते॥४०॥

tatastvajjñānasampannaḥ sadgurustena labhyate /
vākyaññānam gurorlabdhvā tvatprasādādvimucyate // 40 //

40. Then that seeker finds a true teacher (a moral preceptor) who is rich with wisdom and is deeply steeped in the true knowledge pertaining to you. And having attained knowledge of the supreme truth or reality in the shape of ‘Maha Vakyas’ (the eternal truths; the great sayings of the Vedas) by the blessings (teachings) of the wise teacher, he gets emancipation and salvation by your grace and kindness (40).

तस्मात्त्वद्भक्तिहीनानां कल्पकोटिशतैरपि। न मुक्तिशङ्का विज्ञानशङ्का नैव सुखं तथा॥४१॥

tasmāttvadbhaktihīnānām kalpakotīśatairapi /
na muktīśaṅkā vijñānaśaṅkā naiva sukhaṁ tathā // 41 //

41. Hence, those who are devoid of your devotion and lack dedication in you, cannot expect to have, even by a remote chance, either emancipation and salvation (Mukti) or ‘Brahma-Gyan’ (i.e. gnosis; the knowledge of the true nature of the soul—that is, it is a microcosmic fraction of the vast macrocosmic supreme Soul of the creation called Brahm) in millions of Kalpas. [That is, almost eternally, perpetually, they will be entangled in the entrapping web cast by Maya in this mundane world and its incumbent cycle of birth and death as well as endless chain of miseries and torments.] Further, this is why there is no chance or scope of their ever having real, true happiness and bliss (41).

अतस्त्वत्पादयुगले भक्तिर्मे जन्मजन्मनि। स्यात्त्वद्भक्तिमतां सङ्गोऽविद्या याभ्यां विनश्यति॥४२॥

atastvatpādayugale bhaktirme janmajanmani /
syāttvadbhaktimatām saṅgo’vidyā yābhyām vinaśyati // 42 //

42. Therefore, my only wish/desire is to devotedly worship you and have sincere and unwavering dedication, devotion and faith in your two holy feet. I should have company of your devotees for all my births and ages to come, because ignorance can be eliminated by these two ways (methods) only (42).

लोके त्वद्भक्तिनिरतास्त्वद्धर्मामृतवर्षिणः। पुनन्ति लोकमखिलं किं पुनःस्वकुलोद्भवान्॥४३॥

loke tvadbhaktiniratāstvadddharmāmṛtavarṣiṇaḥ /
punanti lokamakhilam kiṁ punaḥsvakulodbhavān // 43 //

43. In this world, those who remain engrossed in your Bhakti (sincere devotion), who are steadfastly vigilant and sincerely eager in having your devotion, who adore you and devotedly worship you, those who pour the nectar-like rain by way of preaching and elucidating upon, by way of highlighting and explaining the righteous, noble and upright path shown by you, which is called ‘Dharma’ —such persons not only purify and redeem the whole world at large but also those born in their own clan. There is no doubt about it (43).

नमोऽस्तु जगतां नाथ नमस्ते भक्तिभावन। नमः कारुणिकानन्त रामचन्द्र नमोऽस्तु ते॥४४॥

namo’stu jagatām nātha namaste bhaktibhāvana /
namaḥ kāruṇikānanta rāmacandra namo’stu te // 44 //

44. Oh Lord of the world! I bow before you in reverence and adoration. Oh the one who loves sincere devotion and faith! I bow before you to pay my obeisance. Oh the merciful, compassionate one! Oh the one without an end (i.e. the eternal one)! I bow before you in reverence. Oh Sri Ramchandra! I repeatedly bow before you to pay my respects and deep regard (44).

देव यद्यत्कृतं पुण्यं मया लोकजिगीषया। तत्सर्वं तव बाणाय भूयाद्राम नमोऽस्तु ते॥४५॥

deva yadyatkṛtaṁ puṇyaṁ mayā lokajigīṣayā /
tatsarvaṁ tava bāṇāya bhūyādrāma namo'stu te // 45 //

45. Oh Lord! Whatever righteous and noble deeds that I have done with the object of attaining the divine and glorious world characterised by righteousness, nobility, good virtues and deeds—let all those worlds be the target of your arrow. [That is, let all my good deeds and their effects be nullified by your arrow because I have sinned against you by misbehaving with you besides becoming haughty and arrogant, something that does not behove the stature of an exalted Brahmin clan in which I am born. Let this be my punishment!] Oh Sri Ram! I submit myself before you with a bowed head' (45).

ततः प्रसन्नो भगवान् श्रीरामः करुणामयः। प्रसन्नोऽस्मि तव ब्रह्मन्यत्ते मनसि वर्तते॥४६॥
दास्ये तदखिलं कामं मा कुरुष्वत्र संशयम्। ततः प्रीतेन मनसा भार्गवो राममब्रवीत्॥४७॥

tataḥ prasanno bhagavān śrīrāmaḥ karuṇāmayāḥ /
prasanno'smi tava brahmanyatte manasi vartate // 46 //
dāsyē tadakhilaṁ kāmāṁ mā kuruṣvātra saṁśayam /
tataḥ prītena manasā bhārgavo rāmamabravīt // 47 //

46-47. Then the most merciful and compassionate Lord Ram became pleased with him and said, 'Oh Brahmin! I am pleased. I shall fulfill all the wishes of your heart; do not doubt it'. At this assurance, Parashuram was happy and he said to Sri Ram (46-47)

यदि मेऽनुग्रहो राम तवास्ति मधुसूदन। त्वद्भक्तसङ्गस्त्वत्पादे दृढा भक्तिः सदास्तु मे॥४८॥

yadi me'nugraho rāma tavāsti madhusūdana /
tvadbhaktasaṅgastvatpāde dṛḍhā bhaktiḥ sadāstu me // 48 //

48. 'Oh Madhusudan Ram (i.e. the most beautiful, charming, attractive and enchanting Ram who keeps the heart in thrall)! If you are pleased with me, let me have constant communion with your devotees and have strong, steadfast and unwavering devotion, faith, dedication and conviction for your holy lotus-like feet (48).

स्तोत्रमेतत्पठेद्यस्तु भक्तिहीनोऽपि सर्वदा। तवद्भक्तिस्तस्य विज्ञानं भूयादन्ते स्मृतिस्तव॥४९॥

stotrametatpaṭhedyastu bhaktihīno'pi sarvadā /
tvadbhaktistasya vijñānaṁ bhūyādante smṛtistava // 49 //

49. Besides this, if any non-believer or one who is devoid of devotion, faith, conviction, dedication and worship (towards/for you) reads or recites this Stotra (devotional hymns), let him be blessed with your devotion and faith, let him have endearment and affection for you, let him become enlightened, realised and a wise one, and let him remember you at the end (i.e. at the time of his death) (49).'

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(4.4) Lord Ram's Stotra by sage Narad

This hymn appears in the holy book 'Adhyatma Ramayan' written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan's Ayodhya Kand (Chapter 2), Canto (Sarga) 1, from verse nos. 9-31½.

Once, the celestial sage Narad visited Lord Ram at Ayodhya, the capital city. It was then that Narad prayed to Lord Ram with the following hymn—

अथ तं नारदोऽप्याह राघवं भक्तवत्सलम्। किं मोहयसि मां राम वाक्यैर्लोकानुसारिभिः॥९॥

atha taṁ nārado'pyāha rāghavaṁ bhaktavatsalam /
kiṁ mohayasi māṁ rāma vākyaairlokānusāribhiḥ // 9 //

9. Then sage Narad said to Raghav (Lord Sri Ram) who is compassionate towards his devotees—'Oh Sri Ram! Why do you create delusions (deception) for me by speaking words like an ordinary human being? (9).

संसार्यहमिति प्रोक्तं सत्यमेतत्त्वया विभो। जगतामादिभूता या सा माया गृहिणी तव॥१०॥

samsāryahamiti proktaṁ satyametattvayā vibho /
jagatāmādhībūtā yā sā māyā gṛhiṇī tava // 10 //

10. Oh Vibho (omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal and all powerful Lord—Sri Ram)! Your words that you are like an ordinary human belonging to this world are appropriate on the surface, so it seems, because Maya—the primordial cosmic energy and the primary cause of all creation—has manifested itself as your

divine consort (housewife, i.e. Sita). [That is, it is your simplicity and lack of arrogance that you speak such humble words] (10).

त्वत्सन्निकर्षाज्जायन्ते तस्यां ब्रह्मादयः प्रजाः। त्वदाश्रया सदा भाति माया या त्रिगुणात्मिका।११॥
सूतेऽजस्रं शुक्लकृष्णलोहिताः सर्वदा प्रजाः। लोकत्रयमहागेहे गृहस्थस्त्वमुदाहृतः।१२॥

tvatsannikarṣājāyante tasyāṃ brahmādayaḥ prajāḥ /
tvadāśrayā sadā bhāti māyā yā triguṇātmikā // 11 //
sūte'jasraṃ śuklākṛṣṇalohitāḥ sarvadā prajāḥ /
lokatrayamahāgehe gr̥hasthastvamudāhṛtaḥ // 12 //

11-12. Oh Lord! Merely by having contact with you (or being close to you), that eternal, supreme and cosmic energy, which is also called your delusion creating powers or Maya, creates Brahma and all other subjects (creatures) of this creation. That Maya—which has the three inherent qualities of Satva (truthful, righteous, virtuous and noble qualities), Raj (more mundane qualities such as desire for enjoyment and seeking pleasures of the sensual world), and Tam (perversions, evils, vices and other base and mean qualities)—is always dependent upon you, and is empowered by you to make itself evident, to enable one to experience it and perceive it (only because you want it to be so). Maya produces three types of creatures or subjects in this creation in accordance with the three qualities mentioned above. These subjects can be classified into these three groups—those who are ‘white or fair complexioned’, those who are ‘red or copper coloured, and those who are ‘dark complexioned’. This living beings or subjects of the Lord’s kingdom are classified into these three categories according to their predominant characters, qualities and virtues respectively. You are called the householder of this great, vast, macrocosmic household called the ‘Triloki’ (literally, the entire universe consisting of the three worlds—celestial, terrestrial, subterranean) (11-12).

[The ‘white complexioned’ are the upper class of people in society—the Satvic people. The ‘copper coloured’ are the Rajsic class—the middle rung people in the society. The ‘dark or black complexioned’ are the ignorant Tamsic class of people, the lowest rung of society.]

त्वं विष्णुर्जानकी लक्ष्मीः शिवस्त्वं जानकी शिवा। ब्रह्मा त्वं जानकी वाणी सूर्यस्त्वं जानकी प्रभा।१३॥

tvam viṣṇurjānakī lakṣmīḥ śivastvam jānakī śivā /
brahmā tvam jānakī vāṇī sūryastvam jānakī prabhā // 13 //

13. You are Lord Vishnu while Janki (Sita) is Laxmi; you are Shiva while Janki is Parvati; you are Brahma while Janki is Saraswati; and you are the Sun while Janki is its radiance and splendour (13).

भवान् शशाङ्कः सीता तु रोहिणी शुभलक्षणा। शक्रस्त्वमेव पौलोमी सीता स्वाहानलो भवान्॥१४॥

bhavān śaśāṅkaḥ sītā tu rohiṇī śubhalakṣaṇā /
śakrastvameva paulomī sītā svāhānalo bhavān // 14 //

14. You are the Moon while Sita is the chaste and virtuous Rohini; you are Indra while Sita is Shachi, the daughter of Pulom; and you are the Fire God while Sita is 'Swaha' (the word pronounced while making offerings to the Gods in the sacrificial fire) (14).

यमस्त्वं कालरूपश्च सीता संयमिनी प्रभो। निर्ऋतिस्त्वं जगन्नाथ तामसी जानकी शुभा॥१५॥

yamastvaṃ kālarūpaśca sītā saṁyaminī prabho /
nirṛtistvaṃ jagannātha tāmasī jānakī śubhā // 15 //

15. Oh Lord! You are like the death God 'Yam' for all (the creation) while Sita is 'Sanyam' (meaning restraint, self control). Oh Lord of the world! You are the benign God called 'Nirriti' (who is worshipped in the south west direction during religious sacrifices) who symbolises such virtues as detachment and dispassion, while the auspicious Sita personifies that aspect of creation that ties the creature to delusions and ignorance in the world because she is Maya personified (15).

राम त्वमेव वरुणो भार्गवी जानकी शुभा। वायुस्त्वं राम सीता तु सदागतिरितीरिता॥१६॥

rāma tvameva varuṇo bhārgavī jānakī śubhā /
vāyustvaṃ rāma sītā tu sadāgatiritīritā // 16 //

16. You are Varun (the Lord of water; also meaning the Sun) while the good charactered Janki is Varuni (his consort); you are Vayu (Wind God) while Sita is Sadaagati (literally, one who is constantly on the move or is ever changing) (16).

कुबेरस्त्वं राम सीता सर्वसंपत्प्रकीर्तिता। रुद्राणी जानकी प्रोक्ता रुद्रस्त्वं लोकनाशकृत्॥१७॥

kuberastvaṃ rāma sītā sarvasaṁpatprakīrtitā /
rudrāṇī jānakī proktā rudrastvaṃ lokanāśakṛt // 17 //

17. Oh Sri Ram! You are Kuber and Sita represents all his wealth, prosperity and majesty; you are Rudra (the angriest form of Lord Shiva), the one who wrathfully slays (annihilates) the world while the auspicious Sita is called Rudrani, his divine consort (17).

लोके स्त्रीवाचकं यावत्तत्सर्वं जानकी शुभा। पुन्नामवाचकं यावत्तत्सर्वं त्वं हि राघव।१८॥
तस्माल्लोकत्रये देव युवाभ्यां नास्ति किञ्चन।१९॥

loke strīvācakaṃ yāvattatsarvaṃ jānakī śubhā /
punnāmavācakaṃ yāvattatsarvaṃ tvaṃ hi rāghava // 18 //
tasmāllokatraye deva yuvābhyāṃ nāsti kiñcana // 19 //

18-19. Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! Verily, whatever is masculine in this creation is represented by you, while the feminine aspect is denoted by Sita. Hence, oh Lord, nothing in this world exists which is not one or the other aspect of either of you (18-19).

त्वदाभासोदिताज्ञानमव्याकृतमितीर्यते। तस्मान्महांस्ततः सूत्रं लिङ्गं सर्वात्मकं ततः॥२०॥

tvadābhāsoditājñānamavyākṛtamitīryate /
tasmānmahāṃstataḥ sūtraṃ liṅgaṃ sarvātmakaṃ tataḥ
// 20 //

20. Your existence is so esoteric and secret that it can only be experienced and known by enlightened wisdom and realisation of what constitutes the absolute ‘truth’ which is formless, nameless and attributeless, and is called ‘Avyaakrit¹’. Its splendour and dazzling brilliance creates in its wake a shadow of ignorance (just like the light of the sun casts a dark shadow). This ignorance is characterised by having a notion of ‘Mahattwa’, or an element of pride and ego, of importance, greatness and grandeur. It is so subtle and imperceptible that no one is able to recognise that he has it, though it inherently is present dissolved uniformly in the whole creation and its creatures. So, when that primary entity called Avyaakrit was enveloped by its own shadow, it virtually became ignorant about its pristine pure and uncorrupt nature. As a result of it, it developed Mahattwa (i.e. it began to think that it has the potential to start the process of creation; that otherwise neutral and dispassionate entity began to think in terms of a creating something that it would call its own product and which would showcase its magnificent and fantastic powers of creation from nothing; it forgot that it is about to set off a chain of actions that would tie it down in its own self-created bog, as it were). So from this Mahattwa evolved the subtle body of the vast creation, called the ‘Sutraatma’ (Hiranya-garbha²). The latter produced the gross body of creation, called the ‘Ling-Deha’ consisting of various sense organs of the myriad creatures of this world) (20).

[¹The word ‘Avyaakrit’ means something that is secret and unknown, has no name, form and attributes, some entity that has no fault or blemishes, something that is the cause of all other things; according to Sankhya school of Hindu philosophy, it refers to Nature.

²The macrocosmic gross body produced from Hiranya-garbha is known as the Viraat Purush. From the latter, the rest of the myriad creation, including the individual creature, evolved.]

अहङ्कारश्च बुद्धिश्च पञ्चप्राणेन्द्रियाणि च । लिङ्गमित्युच्यते प्राज्ञैर्जन्ममृत्युसुखादिमत् ॥२१॥

ahaṅkāraśca buddhiśca pañcaprāṇendriyāṇi ca /
liṅgamityucyate prājñairjanmamṛtyusukhādimat // 21 //

21. [Describing what is ‘Ling-Deha’, Narad elucidates further—] The wise and learned people (Pragya Jan) call the collective product produced by the various permutations and combinations or assorted collection of such qualities as ‘Ahankar’ (pride, vanity, hypocrisy, haughtiness, arrogance) and ‘Buddhi’ (intelligence, erudition, discrimination, rationality, logic), as well as the five vital life sustaining vital winds called the ‘Panch-prans’¹ and the ten sense organs called ‘Indris’² as ‘Ling-Deh’ , having the attributes of and characterised by birth, death, sorrows and happiness (21).

[¹The five vital wind forces of life are the following—(a) Pran (the vital air that sustains life); (b) Apan (the wind that passes down in the body); (c) Samaan (balancing forces of life); (d) Vyan (the vital air which pervades throughout the body and the mind); (e) Uddan (the air/wind which helps the body to rise up).

²The ten sense organs are—five organs of perception such as ears, nose, tongue, eyes, skin, and five organs of action such as mouth, hand, leg, the organs of excretion and the organs of reproduction.]

स एवं जीवसंज्ञश्च लोके भाति जगन्मयः । अवाच्यानाद्यविद्यैव कारणोपाधिरुच्यते ॥२२॥

sa eva jīvasamjñāśca loke bhāti jaganmayah /
avācānādyavidyaiva kāraṇopādhirucyate // 22 //

22. The pure consciousness, when it is engrossed in this deceptive world and falsely identifies its pure self with this gross body and becomes proud of it, is called a Jiva (a living creature). ‘Ignorance’ which has no end or beginning and which cannot be described by words is the cause and attribute or characteristic feature of this thing called Jiva (creature) (22).

स्थूलं सूक्ष्मं कारणाख्यमुपाधित्रितयं चित्तेः । एतैर्विशिष्टो जीवः स्याद्वियुक्तः परमेश्वरः ॥२३॥

sthūlaṁ sūkṣmaṁ kāraṇākhyamupādhitrityayaṁ citeḥ /
etairviśiṣṭo jīvaḥ syādvīyuktaḥ parameśvaraḥ // 23 //

23. Pure, unadulterated consciousness has three forms of bodies in which it resides when it assumes the form of a creature—physical or gross, subtle and invisible, and causal or the one which is the origin of the rest. When this consciousness is equipped with the attributes or characters associated with these three types of bodies, it is

known as Jiva (creature), and when it is free from these three, it is famed as 'Parmeshwar' (the supreme Soul) (23).

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्याख्या संसृतिर्या प्रवर्तते। तस्या विलक्षणः साक्षी चिन्मात्रस्त्वं रघूत्तम॥२४॥

jāgratsvapnasuṣṭyākhyā saṁsṛtiryā pravartate /
tasyā vilakṣaṇaḥ sākṣī cinmātrastvaṁ raghūttama // 24 //

24. Oh the best in the clan of Raghu (Sri Ram)! You are unique in the sense that you are a stranger to, are beyond and superior to, exception to and separate from, beyond the purview, reach and realm of the three states in which the whole creation exists. These three states of existence are called-- the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state of existence. You are simply a conscious witness to these three states of existence (24).

त्वत्त वं जगज्जातं त्वयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्। त्वय्येव लीयते कृत्स्नं तस्मात्त्वं सर्वकारणम्॥२५॥

tvatta eva jagajjātaṁ tvayi sarvaṁ pratiṣṭhitam /
tvayyeva liyate kṛtsnaṁ tasmāttvaṁ sarvakāraṇam // 25 //

25. This whole visible/invisible creation has risen from you, is sustained by you and merges (coalesces) back into you. That is why you are the primary cause (the essence, reality, elementary source, the truth) of all that exists (25).

रज्जावहिमिवात्मानं जीवं ज्ञात्वा भयं भवेत्। पराम्माहमिति ज्ञात्वा भयदुःखैर्विमुच्यते॥२६॥

rajjāvahimivātmānaṁ jīvaṁ jñātvā bhayaṁ bhavet /
parātmāhamiti jñātvā bhayaduḥkhairvimucyate // 26 //

26. Even as the illusion of a snake in a rope creates mortal fear of it, the misleading belief (i.e. deceptive and erroneous thought) that this 'Jiva' (creature with a physical body) is 'me' (as in verses 20-23) creates false fear in a person. Otherwise, when he realises that he is the 'Parmatma' (the macrocosmic, supreme Soul itself in a microcosmic form), he is liberated from all fears and sorrows, all consternations and perplexities associated with this mundane, deluding world. This realisation removes the veils of deception and illusions sheathing (enveloping, covering) his discrimination faculty, intellect, mind and wisdom, and it is called enlightenment (26).

चिन्मात्रज्योतिषा सर्वाः सर्वदेहेषु बुद्ध्यः। त्वया यस्मात्प्रकाशयन्ते सर्वस्यात्मा ततो भवान्॥२७॥

cinmātrajyotiṣā sarvāḥ sarvadeheṣu buddhayaḥ /
tvayā yasmātparakāśyante sarvasyātmā tato bhavān // 27 //

27. Since you reside inside the body of all in the form of a divine spark of life and a light of pure, divine and sublime consciousness and illuminate the mind-intellect complex, therefore it is you who is their soul, i.e. the life-giving force, or the real/truthful identity, or Atma of the creature. This Atma, which is the pure consciousness, is called the ‘true self’ (27).

अज्ञानान्यस्यते सर्वं त्वयि रज्जौ भुजङ्गवत् । त्वज्ज्ञानाल्लीयते सर्वं तस्माज्ज्ञानं सदाभ्यसेत् ॥२८॥

ajñānānnyasyate sarvaṁ tvayi rajjo bhujaṅgavat /
tvajjñānāliiyate sarvaṁ tasmājjñānaṁ sadābhyaset // 28 //

28. Like the illusion of a serpent (or the imagination of a serpent) in a rope, the whole world is imagined to be present in you due to ignorance. Hence, when the true nature of your supreme, sublime, ethereal and transcendental ‘Being’ is realised and understood, this illusionary and deceptive imagination also vanishes. That is why a seeker should practice ‘Gyan’ (pursuit of the truth, the essential, basic, elementary nature of existence, its cause and effect, its origin and end, based on analysis and sound thinking, not distracted by illusionary or misleading inputs; acquisition of correct wisdom and having deep insight into reality) (28).

त्वत्पादभक्तियुक्तानां विज्ञानं भवति क्रमात् । तस्मात्त्वद्भक्तियुक्ता ये मुक्तिभाजस्त एव हि ॥२९॥

tvatpādabhaktiyuktānāṁ vijñānaṁ bhavati kramāt /
tasmāttvadbhaktiyuktā ye muktibhājasta eva hi // 29 //

29. Only those persons who are blessed and fortunate to be endowed (possessed) with your dedicated devotion and have unwavering faith and conviction in you can ever expect to achieve true knowledge (Gyan). And since wisdom, enlightenment and realisation are the paths to emancipation and salvation, hence those who are possessed of your Bhakti can only expect to have deliverance and liberation from the world (29).

अहंत्वद्भक्तभक्तानां तद्भक्तानां च किङ्करः । अतो मामनुगृह्णीष्व मोहयस्व न मां प्रभो ॥३०॥

ahaṁ tvadbhaktabhaktānāṁ tadbhaktānāṁ ca kiṅkaraḥ /
ato māmanugrṇīṣva mohayasva na māṁ prabho // 30 //

30. Oh Lord! I am a servant (follower) of those who are, in turn, devotees (followers) of those who follow your (true, sincere, ardent, diligent, unwavering and realised) other devotees. [That is, I am a 4th rung devotee.]

So, please do not cast your magical spell of delusions on me (in order to check my aptitude and sincerity, because I'd fail miserably in it as I am not well qualified and am simply a humble servant of yours). But instead, show your grace, munificence and benevolence upon me (30).

त्वन्नाभिकमलोत्पन्नो ब्रह्मा मे जनकः प्रभो। अतस्तवाहं पौत्रोऽस्मि भक्तं मां पाहि राघव॥३१॥

tvannābhikamalotpanno brahmā me janakaḥ prabho /
atastavāhaṁ pautro'smi bhaktaṁ mām pāhi rāghava // 31 //

31. Oh Lord! Brahma, who was born on a divine lotus which had emerged from your navel, is my father—hence, I am your grandson. So, oh Raghav (Sri Ram), you should save and protect me, who am your devotee (and relative)' (31).

इत्युक्त्वा बहुशो नत्वा स्वानन्दाश्रुपरिप्लुतः॥३१½॥

ityuktvā bahuśo natvā svānandāśrupariplutaḥ // 31½ //

31½ Saying so and repeatedly bowing his head in reverence, Narad's eyes were filled with tears of joy and exhilaration. (31½)'

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(4.5) Lord Ram's Stotra by sage Valmiki

This hymn appears in the holy book 'Adhyatma Ramayan' written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan's Ayodhya Kand (Chapter 2), Canto (Sarga) 6, from verse nos. 52-63.

Lord Ram met the legendary sage Valmiki, who was to later compose the epic Ramayana narrating the life-story of Lord Ram in detail, at his hermitage in the forest. The Lord sought his advice on the place where he should live with Sita and Laxman. Valmiki got an opportunity, and he made good use of it by narrating the symbolic places where the Lord should live for the benefit of his devotees. These symbolic residences or dwellings of the Lord are his metaphoric temples where the Lord always lives cheerfully. In essence they outline the glorious and auspicious virtues that a wise and clever person must inculcate in his own self in order to ensure that the Lord can make his abode in the devotee's own inner-self. If this indeed happens then the person has no need to go and search the Supreme Lord anywhere outside.

त्वमेव सर्वलोकानां निवासस्थानमुत्तमम्। तवापि सर्वभूतानि निवाससदनानि हि॥५२॥

tvameva sarvalokānāṃ nivāsasthānamuttamam /
tavāpi sarvabhūtāni nivāśasadanāni hi // 52 //

52. Sage Valmiki said—'Oh Sri Ram! You are the only and the best place for all the creatures to reside in (i.e. you are the only solace and refuge for the creatures, they take and find shelter with you; you are the final resting place for their soul), while at the same time, they are your abode (because you reside in their bosom as their pure consciousness, their pure self, their microcosmic and subtle soul or their Atma) (52).

एवं साधारणं स्थानमुक्तं ते रघुनन्दन। सीतया सहितस्येति विशेषं पृच्छतस्तव॥५३॥

evaṃ sādharmaṇaṃ sthānamuktaṃ te raghunandana /
sītayā sahitasyeti viśeṣaṃ prcchatastava // 53 //

53. Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! This is the general place (i.e. in a nutshell, so to speak) where you can (or do) reside. But since you have asked me for some specific places where you can stay with Sita— (53).

तद्वक्ष्यामि रघुश्रेष्ठ यत्ते नियतमन्दिरम्। शान्तानां समदृष्टीनामद्वेष्टृणां च जन्तुषु।
त्वामेव भजतां नित्यं हृदयं तेऽधिमन्दिरम्॥५४॥

tadvakṣyāmi raghuśreṣṭha yatte niyatamandiram /
śāntānāṃ samadrṣṭīnāmadveṣṭāṇāṃ ca jantuṣu /
tvāmeva bhajatāṃ nityaṃ hrdayaṃ te'dhimandiram // 54 //

54. —So, oh the exalted son of Raghu's clan, I shall now list those specific places where you can live. He who is tranquil, serene, calm and peaceful, who treats all alike with equanimity and equitability without any distinction whatsoever and is uniform towards all, who is without any jealousy, envy, malice, ill-will and hatred towards anyone, and who constantly, consistently and persistently worships, reveres, honours, adores and remembers you day and night—his heart is the main (chief) place where you can (or do) reside (i.e. it is your temple) (54).

धर्मधर्मान्परित्यज्यत्वामेव भजतोऽनिशम्। सीतया सह ते राम तस्य हृत्सुखमन्दिरम्॥५५॥

dharmādharmaṇparityajya tvāmeva bhajato'niśam /
sītayā saha te rāma tasya hr̥tsukhamandiram // 55 //

55. He who is not too obsessed with either Dharma (righteousness, noble deeds, probity etc.) or Adharma (unrighteousness, evil deeds, impropriety etc.), and instead,

constantly worships, adores and remembers you—Oh Sri Ram, you should reside in his heart-like temple most cheerfully, joyfully and comfortably along with Sita (55).

त्वनमन्त्रजापको यस्तु त्वामेव शरणं गतः। निर्द्वन्द्वो निःस्पृहस्तस्य हृदयं ते सुमन्दिरम्॥५६॥

tvāmantrajāpako yastu tvāmeva śaraṇaṃ gataḥ /
nirdvandvo niḥspṛhastasya hṛdayaṃ te sumandiram // 56 //

56. He who reverentially repeats (does ‘Jaap’ or ‘Japa’ of) your holy name, who takes shelter and refuge in your holy feet, who is without confusions, doubts, suspicions or dilemmas of any kind, and who does not have any worldly attachments, allurements and attractions of any manner whatsoever and remains neutral, aloof, indifferent, dispassionate and detached—the heart of such a person is your beautiful temple (residence, abode) (56).

निरहङ्कारिणः शान्ता ये रागद्वेषवर्जिताः। समलोष्टाश्मकनकास्तेषां ते हृदयं गृहम्॥५७॥

nirahaṅkāriṇaḥ śāntā ye rāgadveṣavarjitāḥ /
samaloṣṭāśmakanakāsteṣāṃ te hṛdayaṃ gṛhaṃ // 57 //

57. He who is devoid of any kind of pride, ego, haughtiness and arrogance, who is of a tranquil, peaceful, calm and serene temperament and emotions, who is without any sort of attachment, attraction, desire or infatuation with anything nor does he have any jealousy, envy, malice, hatred or ill-will towards anyone, and who treats a dead ‘Pinda’ (a ball-shaped rounded dough made of cereals offered to dead ancestors; literally, any lifeless dead body), a stone and a piece of gold equally (without distinguishing between them)—the heart of such a person is your residence (57).

त्वयि दत्तमनोबुद्धिर्यः सन्तुष्टः सदा भवेत्। त्वयि सन्त्यक्तकर्मा यस्तन्मनस्ते शुभं गृहम्॥५८॥

tvayi dattamanobuddhiryaḥ santuṣṭa sadā bhavet /
tvayi santyaktakarmā yastanmanaste śubhaṃ gṛhaṃ // 58 //

58. He who concentrates (focuses) his mind and intellect, his thoughts and emotions on you and remains ever contented and satisfied, and who offers all his deeds (and their results) to you—his mind and heart is your auspicious abode (58).

यो न द्वेष्ट्यप्रियं प्राप्य प्रियं प्राप्य न हृष्यति। सर्वं मायेति निश्चित्य त्वां भजेत्तन्मनो गृहम्॥५९॥

yo na dveṣṭyapriyaṃ prāpya priyaṃ prāpya na hr̥ṣyate /
sarvaṃ māyeti niścitya tvāṃ bhajettanmano gṛhaṃ // 59 //

59. He who does not feel any kind of malice, ill-will or hatred, i.e. never gets agitated, angry, upset and vengeful even when subjected to unpleasantness or unfavourable and unsavoury circumstances of all kinds, and neither does he feel exhilarated and gets thrilled, happily excited or delighted on receiving anything pleasant or having favourable circumstances, and having decided that all the worldly events and happenings are mere illusions, deceptions and hallucinations created by Maya, he constantly remembers you, worships you, reveres you, honours you and adores you—the heart and mind of such a person is your residence (59).

षड्भावादिविकारान्यो देहे पश्यति नात्मनि। क्षुत्तृ सुखं भयं दुःखं प्राणबुद्ध्योर्निरीक्षते ॥६०॥
संसारधर्मैर्निर्मुक्तस्तस्य ते मानसं गृहम् ॥६१॥

ṣaḍbhāvādivikārānyo dehe paśyati nātmani /
kṣuttrī sukhaṁ bhayaṁ duḥkhaṁ prāṇabuddhyornirīkṣate
// 60 //
saṁsāradharmairnirmuktastasya te mānaśaṁ grāhaṁ // 61 //

60-61. He who sees the six faults¹ in this gross body but not in the eternal, imperishable and pure soul, who regards hunger, thirst, happiness, sorrows, grief, consternations and fears etc. as a defect of the vital winds called Prans and the mind-intellect complex (and not of the eternal, pure, enlightened, wise, self contained and self satisfied soul or Atma which is beyond any of the faults), and who is detached from the various aspects of the behavioral world—the Mana (the thoughts and emotions, the heart, mind and intellect) of such a person is your own abode (60-61).

[¹The six faults or defects relevant to the body are—(1) those associate with power and authority, such as arrogance, haughtiness, ego, pride and vanity; (2) the horrible torments undergone during birth; (3) the problems of growing up and development; (4) the problems associated with change of any kind happening in life; (5) the tendency of the body to gradually lose its vigour and vitality and become progressively weak and decrepit; and (6) its ultimate decay, destruction and ruin.]

पश्यन्ति ये सर्वगुहाशयस्थं त्वां चिद्घनं सत्यमनन्तमेकम्।
अलेपकं सर्वगतं वरेण्यं तेषां हृदब्जे सह सीतया वस ॥६२॥

paśyanti ye sarvaguḥāśayasthaṁ tvāṁ cidghanaṁ satyamanantamekaṁ /
alepakam sarvagataṁ vareṇyaṁ teṣāṁ hr̥dabje saha sītayā vasa // 62 //

62. He who sees the Supreme Being represented by you who are a treasure of enlightenment and wisdom, are a personification, embodiment or an image of the universal and ultimate truth, are eternal and infinite having no beginning or an end, are the one and the only one in this creation (i.e. you are matchless, peerless, unparalleled, unique and without a second), are faultless, untarnished and sinless, are all-pervading, omnipresent, all knowing and omniscient, are worthy of honour,

reverence, adoration, worship, and devotion, are present in the bosom of all the creatures as their Atma or soul—oh Lord Sri Ram, you and Sita should make residence in their lotus-like hearts (62).

निरन्तराभ्यासदृढीकृतात्मनां त्वत्पादसेवापरिनिष्ठितानाम् ।
त्वन्नामकीर्त्या हतकल्मषाणां सीतासमेतस्य गृहं हृदब्जे ॥६३॥

nirantarābhyāsadr̥ḥīkṛtātmanām tvatpādasevāpariniṣṭhitānām /
tvannāmakīrtyā hatakalmaṣāṇām sītāsametasya gr̥haṁ hr̥dabje // 63 //

63. He whose faculty of reasoning, thoughts, discrimination and intellect as well as the virtues of the mind to concentrate and focus and pay attention to anything (collectively called ‘Chitta’) have become stable by constant practice, who involves himself constantly in the service of your holy feet (i.e. remains steadfastly devoted to you and in serving you), whose sins and accumulated effects of evil deeds have been destroyed by the singing of your holy name in chorus (because it purifies the heart, mind and the intellect)—their lotus-like heart is the residence of both you and Sita (63).

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(4.6) Lord Ram’s Stotra by sage Sutikshan

This hymn appears in the holy book ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan’s Aranya Kand (Chapter 3), Canto (Sarga) 2, from verse nos. 25-34.

Saga Sutikshan was the disciple of sage Agastya and an ardent devotee of Lord Ram. When he got the wind that the Lord is coming to meet him, he was overwhelmed with extreme ecstasy. The following hymn is attributed to him.

सुतीक्ष्णस्याश्रमं प्रागात्प्रख्यातमृषिसङ्कुलम् । सर्वतुगुणसम्पन्नं सर्वकालसुखावहम् ॥२५॥

sutīkṣṇasyāśramam prāgātpṛakhyātamṛṣisaṅkulam /
sarvartuguṇasampannam sarvakālasukhāvaham // 25 //

25. After that, they (Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita) went to the famous sage Sutikshan's hermitage which was full of many sages, seers, ascetics and hermits, had the pleasant and charming characters typical of all the seasons, and, therefore, was very comfortable at all times (25).

राममागतमाकर्ण्य सुतीक्ष्णः स्वयमागतः। अगस्त्यशिष्यो रामस्य मन्त्रोपासनतत्परः।
विधिवत्पूजयामास भक्त्युत्कण्ठितलोचनः॥२६॥

rāmamāgatamākarnya sutikṣṇaḥ svayamāgataḥ /
agastyaśiṣyo rāmasya mantropāsanatātparaḥ /
vidhivatpūjayāmāsa bhaktyutkanṭhitalocanaḥ // 26 //

26. Hearing of Sri Ram's arrival, sage Agastya's disciple Sutikshan, who was a worshipper of the 'Ram Mantra' (the holy name of Sri Ram as prescribed by the Vedas, and especially the Ram Uttar Taponishad, as being the salvation provider group of holy letters) went forward to receive the Lord himself, and duly worship him as per established tradition. At that time, sage Sutikshan's eyes were devotionally eager to have Darshan (divine, holy and august sight or view) of the Lord (26).

सुतीक्ष्ण उवाच
त्वन्मन्त्रजाप्यहमनन्तगुणाप्रमेय सीतापते शिविरिश्विसमाश्रिताङ्घ्रे।
संसारसिन्धुरणामलपोतपाद रामाभिराम सततं तव दासदासः॥२७॥

sutikṣṇa uvāca
tvanmantrajāpyahamanantaguṇāprameya
sītāpate śivaviriñcisamāśritāṅghre /
saṁsārasindhutarāṇāmalapotapāda
rāmābhirāma satataṁ tava dāsadāsaḥ // 27 //

27. Sage Sutikshan said, 'Oh Sitapati (a form of address for Sri Ram; literally meaning the husband of Sita), the one with endless virtues who is measureless, limitless and endless! It is your holy Mantra that I repeat constantly. Oh Sri Ram, the enchanting, beautiful and bewitching one! Lord Shiva and Brahma are dependent on (i.e. have taken shelter in) your holy feet which are like a strong and sturdy boat/ship to take one across the ocean-like mundane and mortal world. I am always the servant (devotee, follower, supplicant) of, and humbler than, your devotees (27).

मामद्य सर्वजगतामविगोचरस्त्वं त्वन्मायया सुतकलत्रगृहान्धकूपे।
मग्नं रिरिक्ष्य मलपुद्गलपिण्डमोहपाशानुबद्धहृदयं स्वयमागतोऽसि॥२८॥

māmadya sarvajagatāmavigocarastvaṁ
tvanmāyayā sutakalatragṛhāndhakūpe /
magnaṁ nirikṣya malapudgalapiṇḍamoha-
pāśānubaddhahṛdayaṁ svayamāgato'si // 28 //

28. Though you are so subtle, sublime and mysterious as well as most grand, stupendous and majestic that you are not the subject matter for comprehension, understanding, debate and grasp by the mind and intellect as well as the sense organs

(senses and perceptions) in this world, you still have mercifully and graciously come here yourself to give your holy Darshan (divine view) to me inspite of realising (recognising) that I am a dude and stone-hearted (i.e. emotionless) one who has fallen in the dead (dry, dark) well represented by various worldly attachments and ties, such as sons, kith, kin and the household, under the spell (influence) of your delusion creating powers called Maya. My heart, under Maya's influence, is shackled by the attachments that I have with this puppet-like body consisting essentially of abhorable and reprehensible things such as faecal matters and urine (i.e. excreta)! (28).

त्वं सर्वभूतहृदयेषु कृतालयोऽपि त्वन्मन्त्रजाप्यविमुखेषु तनोषि मायाम् ।
त्वन्मन्त्रसाधनपरेष्वपयाति माया सेवानुरूपफलदोऽसि यथा महीपः ॥२९॥

tvam sarvabhūtahṛdayeṣu kṛtālayopi
tvanmantrajāpyavimukheṣu tanoṣi māyām /
tvanmantrasāadhanapareṣvapayāti māyā
sevānurūpaphalado'si yathā mahīpaḥ // 29 //

29. Though you dwell in the heart of all the creatures uniformly, still those who do not repeat (recite, remember, meditate upon, chant) your holy Mantra, are enchanted and trapped (i.e. captivated, influenced, enthralled, under the magical spell of and held in sway) by your Maya (delusion creating powers), while those who are diligent, sincere and steadfast in having devotion for as well as having a firm conviction and faith in the divine powers and potentials of your holy and divine Mantra, are able to avoid (or get over with, or remove the deluding effects of) your Maya. In this manner, just like a wise, judicious and just king, you give fruits (rewards) to all according to their service (deeds, actions, diligence, sincerity, faith, conviction and belief) (29).

विश्वस्य सृष्टिलयसंस्थिति हेतुरेकस्त्वं मायया त्रिगुणया विधिरीशविष्णु ।
भासीश मोहितधियां विविधाकृतिस्त्वं यद्वद्रविः सलिलपात्रगतो ह्यनेकः ॥३०॥

viśvasya sṛṣṭilayasamsthiti heturekastvam
māyayā triguṇayā vidhirīśaviṣṇu /
bhāsīśa mohitadhiyām vividhākṛtistvam
yadvadraviḥ salilapātragato hyanekaḥ // 30 //

30. Oh the Lord of the universe! Actually it is only you who, being the cause of the origin, sustenance and annihilation of this universe, appear in different forms such as that of Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer) and Shiva (the annihilator) by the virtue of your illusion-creating powers represented by Maya. This Maya (delusion-creating power of the supreme Brahman) basically constitutes of three inherent qualities, called 'Triguna', which manifests itself as these Trinity Gods (Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva or Rudra the concluder). Similarly, it is you who appear in various forms (such as birds, animals, trees and human beings—the males and the females, etc.) in the sight of people who are under the deceptive and

illusionary spell of your Maya just like the same sun appears to be numerous when its image is viewed in different pans containing water (30).

प्रत्यक्षतोऽद्य भवतश्चरणारविन्दं पश्यामि राम तमसः परतः स्थितस्य ।
दृग्रूपतस्त्वमसतामविगोचरोऽपि त्वन्मन्त्रपूतहृदयेषु सदा प्रसन्नः ॥३१॥

pratyakṣato'dya bhavataścaraṇāravindam
paśyāmi rāma tamaśaḥ parataḥ sthitasya /
dr̥grūpatastvasatāmavigocarō'pi
tvanmantrapūtahr̥dayeṣu sadā prasannaḥ // 31 //

31. Oh Sri Ram! Though I am ignorant and lack the depth of knowledge required to realise the truth and reality about you, and you are beyond the scope (or parameters) of ignorance and lack of true knowledge, still I am so fortunate that I am seeing your holy and divine feet in practical/physical terms today. (This goes to prove that—) Though you are invisible to (i.e. not perceived, not experienced, not witnessed, not seen or visualised by) unrighteous people, you still show your benevolence and munificence towards those whose mind, heart and intellect have been purified by doing Japa (constant repetition) of your holy Mantra (which include your holy and divine name) (31).

पश्यामि राम तव रूपमरूपिणोऽपि मायाविडम्बनकृतं सुमनुष्यवेषम् ।
कन्दर्पकोटिसुभगं कमनीयचापवाणं दयार्द्रहृदयं स्मितचारुवक्त्रम् ॥३२॥

paśyāmi rāma tava rūpamarūpiṇo'pi
māyāviḍambanakṛtaṁ sumanuṣyaवेṣam /
kandarpakoṭisubhagaṁ kamanīyacāpabāṇam
dayārdrahr̥dayaṁ smitacāruvaktraṁ // 32 //

32. Oh Sri Ram! Though (as the supreme transcendental Brahm) you are without a form and attributes, still I am fortunate that I am watching your manifested form as a most attractive and charming human being which you have assumed on the strength of your own delusion-creating powers. This human form of yours is as radiant as crores (millions) of Kamdeo-cupids. You hold an enchanting bow, which can captivate and vanquish all, either by its strength or by its beauty, as your adornment; your heart is compassionate and malleable (i.e. merciful), while your face looks most attractive and enchanting with its sweet, pleasant and a bewitching smile (32).

सीतासमेतमजिनाम्बरमप्रधृष्यं सौमित्रिणा नियतसेवितपादपङ्कम् ।
नीलोत्पलद्युतिमनन्तगुणं प्रशान्तं मद्भागधेयमनिशं प्रणमामि रामम् ॥३३॥

sītāsameta majināmbaramapradhr̥ṣyam

saumitriṇā niyatasevitapādapadmaṃ /
 nīlotpaladyutimanantaguṇaṃ praśāntaṃ
 madbhāgadheyamaniśaṃ praṇamāmi rāmaṃ // 33 //

33. I always, day and night, reverentially bow to Sri Ram who is with Sita, wears a deer skin, is always victorious and invincible, whose lotus-like feet are routinely served by the son of Sumitra (Laxman), whose countenance resembles a blue (i.e. rain bearing dark) cloud having the dazzle of lightening, who is endowed with immeasurable and countless virtues, is most serene, tranquil, placid and peaceful, and is an image (reflection, personification, embodiment) of my good fortunes (33).

जानन्तु राम तव रूपमशेषदेशकालाद्युपाधिरहितं घनचित्प्रकाशम्।
 प्रत्यक्षतोऽद्य मम गोचरमेतदेव रूपं विभातु हृदये न परं विकान्क्षे॥३४॥

jānantu rāma tava rūpamaśeṣadeśa
 kālādyupādhirahitaṃ ghanacitprakāśaṃ /
 pratyakṣato'dya mama gocarametadeva
 rūpaṃ vibhātu hrdaye na paraṃ vikāṅkṣe // 34 //

34. Oh Sri Ram! Let those who recognise you in your true transcendental form—which is without any attributes or characteristics associated with place, circumstance, time etc., and is a treasury (a source, a fount) of the eternal light of truth and enlightenment—let them be contented and know it as such (or recognise you as such). But for me, let this charming image of your personified form as the visible counterpart of that supreme Soul called 'Ram', which I behold in front of me now, be always experienced and enshrined in my heart in this very form. I do not have a desire for (i.e. to meditate, concentrate, have devotion for, worship) any other form of the Lord except that which I behold in front of my eyes right now!' (34).

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(4.7) Lord Ram's Stotra by sage Agastya

This hymn appears in the holy book 'Adhyatma Ramayan' written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan's Aranya Kand (Chapter 3), Canto (Sarga) 3, from verse nos. 17-44.

After meeting sage Sutikshan, Lord Ram visited the exalted sage Agastya and paid his obeisance to the sage. The sage, on the other hand, welcomed the Lord and offered his worship in the form of the following hymn—

सुखोपविष्टमेकान्ते रामं शशिनिभाननम्। कृताञ्जलिरुवाचेदमगस्त्यो भगवानृषिः॥१७॥
 त्वदागमनमेवाहं प्रतीक्षन्समवस्थितः। यदा क्षीरसमुद्रान्ते ब्रह्मणा प्रार्थितः पुरा॥१८॥

भूमेभरापनुत्त्यर्थं रावणस्य वधाय च । तदादि दर्शनाकांक्षी तव राम तपश्चरन् ।
वसामि मुनिभिः सार्धत्वामेव परिचिन्तयन् ॥१९॥

sukhopaviṣṭamekānte rāmaṃ śāsinibhānanam /
kṛtāñjaliruvācedamagastyo bhagavānṛṣiḥ // 17 //
tvadāgamanamevāhaṃ pratikṣansamavasthitaḥ /
yadā kṣīrasamudrānte brahmaṇā prārthitaḥ purā // 18 //
bhūmerbhārāpanuttyartham rāvaṇasya vadhāya ca /
tadādi darśanākāṅkṣī tava rāma tapaścaran /
vasāmi munibhiḥ sārddham tvāmeva paricintayan // 19 //

17-19. When Sri Ram was sitting (resting, relaxing) comfortably alone, Lord Agastya, who was like a Lord of the sages and hermits, said to Sri Ram, who was like a full moon, with palms joined together in submission (17),---

‘Oh Sri Ram! Since the time when near the ‘Kshirsagar’ (the legendary ocean of milk), Lord Brahma had prayed to you to kill Ravana in order to remove the burden of the earth, I have been living here along with other hermits, sages and seers with a sincere and eager desire to have your divine, holy Darshan, doing Tapa (austerities and penances), and always remembering and thinking about you and patiently waiting for your auspicious arrival one day (18-19).

सृष्टेः प्रागेक एवासीर्निर्विकल्पोऽनुपाधिकः । त्वदाश्रया त्वद्विषया माया ते शक्तिरुच्यते ॥२०॥

srṣṭeḥ prāgeka evāsīrnirvikalpo’nupādhikaḥ /
tvadāśrayā tvadviṣayā māyā te śaktirucyate // 20 //

20. In the beginning of this creation you were all alone, were without an alternative, and without any attributes and honours (i.e. there was nothing else besides you). ‘Maya’—which relies upon you, is sustained by you, dwells in you and which has you as its subject or focus—is said to be a manifestation of your own stupendous, cosmic energy and magical, mysterious powers (which are infinitely potent, intensely effective and most incomprehensible for the mind-intellect to understand and decipher) (20).

त्वामेव निर्गुणं शक्तिरावृणोति यदा तदा । अव्याकृतमिति प्राहुर्वेदान्तपरिनिष्ठिताः ॥२१॥

tvāmeva nirguṇam śaktirāvṛṇoti yadā tadā /
avyākṛtamiti prāhurvedāntapariniṣṭhitāḥ // 21 //

21. When this ‘Maya-Shakti’ (deluding, mystical powers and cosmic, infinite creative energy) surrounds your ‘Nirguna’ form as a transparent sheath, veil or cover, it is called ‘Avyākṛit’ by those who are well steeped and well versed in the philosophy of Vedant (the philosophy of the Upanishads) (21).

मूलप्रकृतिरित्येके पाहुर्मायेति केचन। अविद्या संसृतिर्बन्ध इत्यादि बहुधोच्यते॥२२॥

mūlaprakṛitirityeke prāhurmayeti kecana /
avidyā saṁsṛtirbandha ityādi bahudhocyate // 22 //

22. Some call this (the delusion creating powers, the eternal infinite cosmic energy, the majestic mystical powers of creation) as ‘Mool Prakriti’ or the essential Nature, and others call it ‘Maya’ or delusions. It is also known, amongst other things, by the names of ‘Avidya’ or ignorance and lack of truthful knowledge, or ‘Sansriti’ which refers to the mortal world consisting of a continuous cycle of ‘birth and death’ and its interminable chain of relationships and miseries, or ‘Bandhan’ which refer to the worldly fetters that shackle a creature to this entrapping, mundane and illusionary world (22).

त्वया संक्षोभ्यमाणा सा महत्तत्त्वं प्रसूयते। महत्तत्त्वादहङ्कारस्त्वया सञ्चोदितादभूत्॥२३॥

tvayā saṁkṣobhyamāṇā sā mahattattvaṁ prasūyate /
mahattattvādahaṅkāraṣṭvayā sañcoditādabhūt // 23 //

23. Excited (inspired, incited, coaxed) by you, this Maya creates ‘Mahattatva’ or that which is great, big, stately and majestic, and which possesses such virtues as grandeur, lordliness, glory, magnificence, importance and distinction. From this notion arose what is known as ‘Ahankar’ or the sense of ego, pride, haughtiness, arrogance and hypocrisy (23).

अहङ्कारो महत्तत्त्वसंवृतस्त्रिविधोऽभवत्। सात्त्विको राजसश्चैव तामसश्चेति भण्यते॥२४॥

ahaṅkāro mahattattvasaṁvṛtastrividho’bhavat /
sāttviko rājasaścaiva tāmasaśceti bhaṇyate // 24 //

24. Being infused and completely infested by the sense of greatness and importance (or Mahattatva), this element of Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance and haughtiness) produces three characteristic virtues, and patterns of temperament and behaviour as an integral character of this creation, viz.—Satvic, Rajsic and Tamsic¹. (24).

[¹The ‘Satvic’ is the best and the most auspicious quality that is present in a creature, the ‘Tamsic’ the worst and the most unrighteous, and the ‘Rajsic’ is the normal characteristic with a greater proportion of Satvic than the Tamsic in it. A combination of all these three qualities makes the overall personality and character of a living being in this creation. The uniqueness of every living being that distinguishes him from the others is the ratio of these three qualities in an individual. If the Satvic is the dominant one, the individual is noble and righteous in his approach to every situation in this life, and he is more intelligent, wise and enlightened as compared to others. Such an individual is more inclined to be calm and dispassionate towards all the temptations arising out of this world. The Rajsic quality makes him more of a

worldly man, but one who understands his responsibilities and lives upto it. The Tamsic man is dominated by all the evils and faults of character one can imagine of.]

तामसात्सूक्ष्मतन्मात्राण्यासन् भूतान्यतः परम्। स्थूलानि क्रमशो राम क्रमोत्तरगुणानि ह॥२५॥

tāmasātsūkṣmatanmātrāṇyāsan bhūtānyataḥ param /
sthūlāni kramaśo rāma kramottaraguṇāni ha // 25 //

25. Oh Sri Ram! Out of the ‘Tamas’ quality (i.e. the third, most base and gross characteristic) emerged the five subtle perceptions of sound, touch, site, taste and smell, and each of these produced their corresponding gross elements, such as the sky/space, air, fire, water and earth respectively (25).

राजसानीन्द्रियाण्येव सात्त्विका देवता मनः। तेभ्योऽभवत्सूत्ररूपं लिङ्गं सर्वगतं महत्॥२६॥

rājasānīndriyāṇyeva sāttvikā devatā manaḥ /
tebhya’bhavatsūtrarūpaṁ liṅgaṁ sarvagataṁ mahat // 26 //

26. Out of the second quality of ‘Rajas’ had emerged the ten sense organs (making up the gross body of the creature). From the ‘Satvic’ first quality were produced the patron Gods of these ten sense organs as well as the Mana (the mind-intellect-heart complex governing the emotions, thoughts and intelligence of a creature and forming its subtle body). With the combination of all these three basic and fundamental characteristic qualities (Tamsic, Rajsic, Satvic) and their forms as described above, there emerged (was produced) the miniscule, atom-like and all-incorporating cosmic entity called ‘Hiranya-Garbha’, which was the macrocosmic subtle body of the entire creation. The other name of this Hiranya-Garbha is the microcosmic subtle body or ‘Sutratma’ (residing in the individual creature itself) (26).

ततो विराट् समुत्पन्नः स्थूलाद् भूतकदम्बकात्। विराजः पुरुषात्सर्वं जगत्स्थावरजङ्गमम्॥२७॥

tato virāṭ samutpannaḥ sthūlād bhūtakadambakāt /
virājaḥ puruṣātsarvaṁ jagatsthāvarajaṅgamam // 27 //

27. Now, as a next step, out of the combination of the five basic gross elements (which are sky/space, air/wind, fire/energy, water and earth, and after the formation of the Hiranya Garbha) emerged (evolved and grew) the ‘Viraat Purush’ (literally large, huge, vast, all encompassing, all covering, colossus, macrocosmic gross body of the creation). Out of this ‘Viraat Purush’ emerged, evolved or manifested this whole myriad animate and/or inanimate creation (27).

देवतिर्यङ्भनुष्याश्च कालकर्मक्रमेण तु। त्वं रजोगुणतो ब्रह्मा जगतः सर्वकारणम्॥२८॥

सत्त्वाद्विष्णुस्त्वमेवास्य पालकः सद्भिरुच्यते। लये रुद्रस्त्वमेवास्य त्वन्मायागुणभेदतः॥२९॥

devatiryaṇmanuṣyāśca kālakarmakrameṇa tu /
tvam rajoguṇato brahmā jagataḥ sarvakāraṇam // 28 //
sattvādviṣṇustvamevāśya pālakaḥ sadbhirucyate /
laye rudrastvamevāśya tvanmāyāguṇabhedaḥ // 29 //

28-29. Depending upon the circumstances, times and needs, it is you who have manifested/revealed yourself in different ‘Yonis’ (forms), such as that of Gods, of animals and winged creatures (birds, insects), and of humans etc. By the virtue of predominance of one or the other quality or characteristic or power that your Maya possesses (as defined previously), it is you who have revealed yourself as the creator Brahma due to the profusion of the Rajsic quality, the sustainer, nourisher and caretaker Vishnu by the superior presence of the Satvic quality, and the destroyer, concluder and annihilator Shiva by the preponderance of the Tamsic quality respectively—this is what the experts say (28-29).

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्याख्या वृत्तयो बुद्धिजैर्गुणैः। तासां विलक्षणो राम त्वं साक्षी चिन्मयोऽव्ययः॥३०॥

jāgratsvapnasuṣṭpyākhyā vṛttayo buddhijairguṇaiḥ /
tāsāṃ vilakṣaṇo rāma tvam sākṣī cinmayo‘vyayaḥ // 30 //

30. Oh Sri Ram! The intellect and mind of a creature has three basic and inherent qualities viz. Satva, Raj and Tama (that determines its integral nature, temperament and inclinations, which in turn decide its general outlook and thought processes, its behaviours and personality). Because of, or by the virtue of the mind-intellect complex's these three basic and inherent qualities, the creature has (displays) three states of consciousness (planes of existence)—which are ‘Jagrat’ (waking state of consciousness), ‘Swapna’ (dream state of consciousness) and ‘Sushupti’ (deep sleep state of consciousness) respectively. But you are totally different and distinct from these; you are beyond their purview. You are only an independent witness to these states. You are eternal consciousness which is an embodiment of enlightenment, wisdom and truthful knowledge. You are completely faultless, without any taints or blemishes of any kind whatsoever (30).

सृष्टिलीलां यदा कर्तुमीहसे रघुनन्दन। अङ्गीकरोषि मायां त्वं तदा वै गुणवानिव॥३१॥

sṛṣṭilīlāṃ yadā kartumihase raghunandana /
aṅgikaroṣi māyāṃ tvam tadā vai guṇavāniva // 31 //

31. Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! When you desire (wish and decide) to create and expand this creation, you embrace (take the help of, or instruct) your Maya for this purpose, and in conjunction with it, you pretend to become one who possesses various characteristics, qualities and attributes (31).

राम माया द्विधा भाति विद्यविद्येति ते सदा। प्रवृत्तिमार्गनिरता अविद्यावशवर्तिनः।
 निवृत्तिमार्गनिरता वेदान्तार्थविचारकाः॥३२॥
 त्वद्भक्तिनिरता ये च ते वै विद्यामयाः स्मृताः। अविद्यावशगा ये तु नित्यं संसारिणश्च ते।
 विद्याभ्यासरता ये तु नित्यमुक्तास्त एव हि॥३३॥

rāma māyā dvidhā bhāti vidyāvidyeti te sadā /
 pravṛttimārganiratā avidyāvaśavartinaḥ /
 nivṛttimārganiratā vedāntārthavicāraḥ // 32 //
 tvadbhaktiniratā ye ca te vai vidyāmayāḥ smṛtā /
 avidyāvaśagā ye tu nityaṁ saṁsāriṇāśca te /
 vidyābhyāsaratā ye tu nityamuktāsta eva hi // 33 //

32-33. Oh Sri Ram! This ‘Maya’ of yours always appears (i.e. is manifested, is apparent, is known, is evolved) in two forms—viz. ‘Vidya’ (truthful knowledge of reality; scholarship, erudition, skills, expertise, wisdom) and ‘Avidya’ (ignorance, delusions, stupidity, lack of true knowledge and erudition). Those creatures who follow/pursue the mundane path of indulgence in, addiction to and attachments with this artificial and entrapping world of deeds and actions as well as remaining engrossed in its material comforts, are under the spell of the latter (Avidya), while those who understand the implication and the essential meaning and teaching of the Upanishads, who wish to follow/pursue the path that leads to liberation, deliverance, detachment and renunciation, and who are well steeped, steadfast, dedicated and sincere in having devotion for you, in worshipping you, in having faith and conviction in you, are understood to be and recognised as being aware, enlightened, wise, realised and knowledgeable ones.

Again, those who are yoked to (i.e. under the influence of) Avidya are eternally shackled to the deluding, mundane and entrapping world consisting of the endless cycle of birth and death, while those who have acquired Vidya (i.e. those who have become enlightened, wise, realised and truly knowledgeable) are the ones who obtain eternal liberation once and for all (32-33).

लोके त्वद्भक्तिनिरतास्त्वन्मन्त्रोपासकाश्च ये। विद्या प्रादुर्भवितेषां नेतरेषां कदाचन॥३४॥

loke tvadbhaktiniratāstvanmantropāsakāśca ye /
 vidyā prādurbhavetteṣāṁ netareṣāṁ kadācana // 34 //

34. In this world, ‘Vidya’ (essential truth, erudition, enlightenment, wisdom, truthful knowledge) emerges (sprouts or takes birth, is rooted, is kindled, is unfolded, is evolved and makes its presence felt) in the internal self (heart, mind, intellect) of only those creatures who have ‘Bhakti’ for you (i.e. are sincere, eager, dedicated and steadfast in your devotion and worship, who have unwavering faith and conviction in you, who have no reliance other than you in this world for their succour and solace), and who concentrate on your holy Mantras and on nothing else (34).

अतस्त्वद्भक्तिसम्पन्ना मुक्ता एव न संशयः। त्वद्भक्त्यमृतहीनानां मोक्षः स्वप्नेऽपि नो भवेत्॥३५॥

atastvadbhaktisampannā muktā eva na saṁśayaḥ /
tvadbhaktyamṛtahīnānāṁ mokṣaḥ svapne'pi no bhavet // 35 //

35. Hence, those persons who are endowed with (posses) your Bhakti are, without doubt, liberated (i.e. freed from the fetters that shackles them to this mundane, deluding existence). Verily, there is no scope of ever obtaining emancipation and salvation, even in one's dreams, without having sincere devotion in you, unflinching faith in you and steady conviction in the path shown by you. (35).

किं राम बहूनोक्तेन सारं किञ्चिद्ब्रवीमि ते। साधुसङ्गतिरेवात्र मोक्षहेतुरुदाहता॥३६॥

kiṁ rāma bahunoktena sāraṁ kiñcidbravāmi te /
sādhusaṅgatirevātra mokṣaheturudāhṛtā // 36 //

36. Oh Sri Ram! What more can I say? I shall tell you the essential and fundamental tenet on this subject—company of ‘Sadhus’ (i.e. saintly, holy and pious people, those with a pure, sincere and uncorrupt heart, mind and intellect) has been the main cause (way, route, medium) that helps in getting/attaining emancipation and salvation, or achieving liberation and deliverance from the ignorance-based deluding, artificial, impermanent and ensnaring world, and breaking free from its shackles for good (36).

[The qualifying virtues of Sadhus are enumerated in the following verse no. 37-39.]

साधवः समचित्ता ये निःस्पृहा विगतैषिणः। दान्ताः प्रशान्तास्त्वद्भक्ता निवृत्ताखिलकामनाः॥३७॥

sādhavaḥ samacittā ye niḥspṛhā vigataiṣiṇaḥ /
dāntāḥ praśāntāstvadbhaktā nivṛttākhilakāmanāḥ // 37 //

37. Those persons who are even-minded and stable, have equanimity and forbearance, are serene, placid, unruffled, unwavering, calm and balanced under adversities as well as favourable circumstances, both during sorrows and troubles as well as under happy and joyous situations in this world; those who are without any desires and wants whatsoever; those who do not have any attachment to their worldly assets such as their wealth and sons, nor harbour any desires pertaining to them; those who have restrained, conquered and suppressed their sense organs and their wayward tendencies or the urge for their gratification; those who are of a serene, calm, peaceful and tranquil temperament and mind; those who are sincerely devoted and dedicated to you; those who are devoid of and free from all desires, greed, avarice, yearnings and ambitions of all kinds— (37);

इष्टप्राप्तिवित्योश्च समाः सङ्गविवर्जिताः। संन्यस्ताखिलकर्माणः सर्वदा ब्रह्मतत्पराः॥३८॥

iṣṭaprāptivipattyośca samāḥ saṅgavivarjitāḥ /
saṁnyastākhilakarmāṇaḥ sarvadā brahmatatparāḥ // 38 //

38. —those who are even-keeled, have equanimity, remain neutral, unaffected, indifferent and aloof even while going through the throes of destruction (unfavourable circumstances) or construction (favourable circumstances); those who are without encumbrances and attachments of any kind; those who abandon and forsake involvement in all types of worldly deeds and getting involved in various actions, i.e. do not regard himself as the ‘doer’ of any deed, nor expects any reward or punishment for it; those who are always the followers of Brahm (i.e. pursue the path of righteousness that leads to the supreme, eternal One)— (38);

यमादिगुणसम्पन्नाः सन्तुष्टा येन केनचित्। सत्सङ्गमो भवेद्यर्हि त्वत्कथाश्रवणे रतिः॥३९॥

yamādiguṇasampannāḥ santuṣṭā yena kenacit /
satsaṅgamo bhavedyārhi tvatkathāśravaṇe ratiḥ // 39 //

39. —those who are endowed with ‘Yam’ and other virtues (e.g. self-restraint of passions and doing penances and austerities); and those who are contented and satisfied with whatever comes their way—such persons who possess these virtues are truly ‘Sadhus’ (saintly, pious, holy, divine, pure in mind and heart). Whenever one is fortunate to get communion and a chance to interact with such saints, one develops endearment for and interest in your divine stories (i.e. in spiritualism) (39).

समुदेति ततो भक्तिस्त्वयि राम सनातने। त्वद्भक्तावुपपन्नायां विज्ञानं विपुलं स्फुटम्॥४०॥

samudeti tato bhaktistvayi rāma sanātane /
tvadbhaktāvupapannāyāṁ vijñānaṁ vipulaṁ sphuṭam // 40 //

40. Oh Sri Ram! Thence, one is blessed with having Bhakti (i.e. having sincere devotion, firm faith, steadfast dedication, unwavering conviction and firm belief) in you who are the eternal, primeval, ancient and truthful Supreme Being. When this happens, one is bestowed with pristine pure, uncorrupted, undiluted and immense wisdom and knowledge pertaining to you as well as the ultimate and fundamental truth about you (40).

उदेति मुक्तिमार्गोऽयमाद्यश्चतुरसेवितः। तस्माद्राघव सद्भक्तिस्त्वयि मे प्रेमलक्षणा॥४१॥

udeti muktimārgo’yamādyāścaturasevitaḥ /
tasmādrāghava sadbhaktistvayi me premalakṣaṇā // 41 //

41. This is the prime path (way, method, course, medium) towards emancipation and salvation followed (adopted) by clever and wise ones. Hence, oh Raghav (Sri Ram), let me have eternal and constant Bhakti in you, a Bhakti marked by sincere love and affection, sincere devotion and faith, sincere conviction and belief, sincere humility and submission for and dedication in you! (41).

सदा भूयाद्धरे सङ्गस्त्वद्भक्तेषु विशेषतः। अद्य मे सफलं जन्म भवत्सन्दर्शनासदभूत् ॥४२॥

sadā bhūyāddhare saṅgastvadbhakteṣu viśeṣataḥ /
adya me saphalaṁ janma bhavatsandarśanādashūṭ // 42 //

42. And oh Hari (an epithet for Lord Vishnu; the Lord who ‘steals’ or removes all the torments of his devotees)! Let me have communion (contact, interaction) with your devotees (ardent, dedicated followers) for most of the time. Oh Lord! My life has been successful (amply rewarded, very fortunate) that I have the privilege of having your divine, august and holy sight (Darshan) today (42).

अद्य मे क्रतवः सर्वे बभूवुः सफलाः प्रभो। दीर्घकालं मया तप्तमनन्यमतिना तपः।
तस्येह तपसो राम फलं तव यदर्चनम् ॥४३॥

adya me kratavaḥ sarve babhūvuḥ saphalāḥ prabho /
dīrghakālaṁ mayā taptamananyamatinā tapaḥ /
tasyeha tapaso rāma phalaṁ tava yadarcanaṁ // 43 //

43. Oh Lord! All my ‘Yagyas’ (sacrifices, religious rituals, penances, austerities, vows etc.) have been completed today (i.e. the aim or object with which I was doing all these have been accomplished today by seeing you). I have done Tapa (austerities, penances, hardships and sufferance) with great diligence and sincerity for a long time. Oh Sri Ram! The physical worship of your divine self that I was able to do today is the evident reward of all those Tapas (43).

सदा मे सीतया सार्धं हृदये वस राघव। गच्छतस्तिष्ठतो वापि स्मृतिः स्यान्मे सदा त्वयि ॥४४॥

sadā me sītayā sārḍhaṁ hṛdaye vasa rāghava /
gacchatastīṣṭhato vāpi smṛtiḥ syānme sadā tvayi // 44 //

44. Oh Raghav! You should always reside in my heart along with Sita. Let me always remember you even while going about my daily chores (44).’

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(4.8) Lord Ram's Stotra by Jatau

This hymn appears in the holy book 'Adhyatma Ramayan' written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan's Aranya Kand (Chapter 3), Canto (Sarga) 8, from verse nos. 44-53.

Jatau (pronounced as Ja-taau) was a vulture by birth, but he was not an ordinary bird. He was a great devotee of Lord Ram and a friend of King Dasrath, the worldly father of the Lord. When the demon Ravana was taking away Sita to Lanka after having abducted her from Lord Ram's hermitage in the forest, Jatau intervened and tried his best to secure the release of Sita from the demon's captivity. But the demon cut off his wings with a sword, and so the bird fell to the ground, mortally wounded. Jatau waited for Lord Ram's arrival, and when the Lord did come he told him about the fact that Sita was being abducted by Ravana and the direction in which he had gone. Lord Ram showed immense affection towards Jatau, showing the latter the same respect that he would have shown his father Dasrath. The Lord wiped his wounds with his own hands using the long curls of his hairs as the mop, lifted him on his laps and moved his loving hands caressingly over his wounded body. Though the Lord requested Jatau to live if he wished so, for the Lord would grant him a new phase of life, but Jatau was extremely wise. He said that he was so fortunate that the Supreme Being is himself standing right before him, and what more favourable chance will he ever get again to die while being loved and caressed by the Lord himself, and while watching the divine sight of the Supreme Being intently as he leaves the mortal body which nevertheless he will have to leave one or the other day, because all living beings have to die one day or the other.

So, when Jatau left his mortal body of a vulture, he assumed a divine form like one of the Gods and went to the heaven. It was at that time that Jatau prayed to Lord Ram with the following hymn—

जटायुरूवाच
अगणितगुणमप्रमेयमाद्यं सकल जगत्स्थितिसंयमादिहेतुम् ।
उपरमपरमं परात्मभूतं सततमहं प्रणतोऽस्मि रामचन्द्रम् ॥४४॥

jaṭāyuruvāca
agaṇitaguṇamaprameyamādyam sakalajagatsthitisamyamādihetum/
uparamaparam parātmabhūtam satatamaham praṇato'smi rāmacandram
// 44 //

44. Jatau prayed—'I remain perpetually bowed in great reverence before Sri Ramchandra who has (possesses, is endowed with) immeasurable auspicious virtues and good characteristics, who is boundless, measureless, limitless and without any parameters, who is the original cause of creation, its sustenance and its ultimate annihilation, who is an embodiment of supreme peace, tranquility and serenity, and is the most exalted and supreme Soul in the creation, called the Parmatma (44).

निरवधिसुखमिन्दिराकटाक्षं क्षपितसुरेन्द्रचतुर्मुखादिदुःखम् ।

नरवरमनिशं नतोऽस्मि रामं वरदमहं वरचापबाणहस्तम् ॥४५॥

niravadhisukhamindirākaṭākṣakṣapitasurendracaturmukhādiduḥkham /
naravaramaniśaṃ nato'smi rāmaṃ varadamahaṃ varacāpabāṇahastam
// 45 //

45. I bow most reverentially day and night before Sri Ram who is an embodiment (or treasury, an abode) of and remains submerged in measureless bliss, happiness and joys, who is the object of affectionate side ways (oblique, askance) glances of Laxmi, who is the remover of the miseries, grief, troubles and tribulations of the Lord of Gods (Indra) as well as of the four-headed Lord (Brahma) and other Gods, who is the best among humans and bestows boons, and who holds a bow and arrows in his hands (45).

त्रिभुवनकमनीयरूपमीड्यं रविशतभासुरमीहितप्रदानम् ।

शरणदमनिशं सुरागमूले कृतनिलयं रघुनन्दनं प्रपद्ये ॥४६॥

tribhuvanakamanīyarūpamīḍyaṃ raviśatabhāsuramīhitapradānam /
śaraṇadamaniśaṃ surāgamūle kṛtanilayaṃ raghunandanaṃ prapadye
// 46 //

46. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Raghunandan (Sri Ram) who is the most beautiful, astoundingly attractive, enchantingly captivating and stupendously charming in the whole of the three worlds (subterranean, terrestrial and celestial), who is worthy of being praised, revered and honoured by all, who is as splendorous, radiant and glorious as hundreds of Suns taken together, who bestows (gives, grants) all the desired or deserved fruits or rewards (to his devotees), who constantly, day and night, gives shelter and refuge in his holy feet to those who seek it, and who resides in their affectionate and loveable hearts (46).

भवविपिनदवाग्निनामधेयं भवमुखदैवतदैवतं दयालुम् ।

दनुजपतिसहस्रकोटिनाशं रवितनयासदृशं हरिं प्रपद्ये ॥४७॥

bhavavipinadavāgnināmadheyaṃ bhavamukhadaivatadaivatam dayālum /
danujapatisahasrakotiṇāśaṃ ravitanayāsadrśaṃ hariṃ prapadye // 47 //

47. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Hari (Sri Ram) whose potent holy name resembles a powerful wild fire for the purpose of destroying this world which is like a dense and impenetrable forest, who is the supreme God who is revered, honoured and worshipped even by Lord Shiva and other Gods, who is the

crusher and vanquisher of crores (millions) of demons and their kings, who is dark complexioned like the waters of the holy river Yamuna, and who is most gracious, kind, benevolent, merciful and compassionate (47).

अविरतभवभावनातिदूरं भवविमुखैर्मुनिभिः सदैव दृश्यम् ।
भवजलधिसुतारणाङ्घ्रिपोतं शरणमहं रघुनन्दनं प्रपद्ये ॥४८॥

aviratabhavabhāvanātidūraṃ bhavavimukhairmunibhiḥ sadaiva drśyam/
bhavajaladhisutāraṅghripotaṃ śaraṇamaham raghunandanam prapadye

// 48 //

48. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Raghunandan (Sri Ram) who is perpetually far away from the reach of and sight of (i.e. inaccessible to) those who are regularly, as a matter of habit, natural inclination and temperament, passionately involved with, are infatuated with, are emotionally attached with, are insatiably attracted to, have an unsatisfied yearning for, are madly running behind and seeking wistfully this material world of artificiality and its illusive comforts. On the other hand, he is always easily visible (accessible, attainable) to those exalted sages, seers, hermits, ascetics and other exalted, realised and holy ones who are detached, uninterested, indifferent and dispassionate towards this world (i.e. who have renounced their link with this artificial and elusive ensnaring world. The holy and divine feet of the Lord are like a ship (or boat) to take one across the ocean of this mundane, deluding, artificial and ensnaring world (48).

गिरिशगिरिसुतामनोनिवासं गिरिवरधारिणमीहिताभिरामम् ।
सुरवरदनुजेन्द्रसेविताङ्घ्रिं सुरवरदं रघुनायकं प्रपद्ये ॥४९॥

giriśagirisutāmanonivāsaṃ girivaradhāriṇamīhitābhirāmam /
suravaradanujendrasevitāṅghriṃ suravaradaṃ raghunāyakaṃ prapadye

// 49 //

49. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Sri Raghunayak (literally, the exalted leader of Raghu's clan; Sri Ram) who resides in the temple-like heart of Lord Shiva and Parvati and is their well-wisher. His character, nature, conduct, behaviour, general demeanours, habits and temperaments, both the worldly as well as the heavenly, are extremely enchanting and pleasant (besides being stellar examples of divinity, holiness, piety, righteousness, auspiciousness, probity, propriety, ethics and morality of the highest order). His holy feet are served (worshipped, adored, honoured) both by the most exalted Gods as well as the king of demons. He is that supreme authority that grants boons even to the Gods (49).

परधनपरदारवर्जितानां परगुणभूतिषु तुष्टमानसानाम् ।

परहितनिरतात्मनां सुसेव्यं रघुवरमम्बुजलोचनं प्रपद्ये ॥५०॥

paradhanaparadāvarjitānām paraguṇabhūtiṣu tuṣṭamānasānām /
parahitaniratātmanām susevyam raghuvaramambujalocanam prapadye
// 50 //

50. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of the lotus-eyed Raghubar (Sri Ram) who is being constantly served by those great noble souls who keep far away from (abhor, detest, never think of, or eye) the wealth, property and women of others. On the contrary, they feel very glad, happy and contented at the virtues, excellence, goodness, glory, prosperity, well-being and success of others, and are always eager for their welfare and well-being (50).

स्मितरुचिरविकासिताननाब्जमतिसुलभं सुरराजनीलनीलम् ।
सितजलरुहचारुनेत्रशोभं रघुपतिमीशगुगुरुं प्रपद्ये ॥५१॥

smitaruciravikāsitānanābjamatisulabham surarājanīlanīlam /
sitajalaruhacārunetraśobham raghupatimīśagurorgurum prapadye
// 51 //

51. I bow most reverentially to and take shelter in the holy feet of Sri Raghupati (Sri Ram) who is the great Guru (moral preceptor) of Lord Shiva! His charming and attractive face is like a fully blossomed lotus flower and is adorned with a bewitching smile that is most attractive, endearing, genteel and charming for the heart, who is most easily accessible to his devotees, the radiant glow of whose body (i.e. his complexion) is beautifully tinged with a bluish hue like that of the 'Indra Neel Mani' (sapphire worn by Indra), and whose enchanting eyes are as adorable, fascinating, magnificent and charming as a white lotus (51).

हरिकमलजशम्भुरूपभेदात्त्वमिह विभासि गुणत्रयानुवृत्तः ।
रविरिव जलपूरितोदपात्रेष्वमरपतिस्तुतिपात्रमीशमीडे ॥५२॥

harikamalajaśambhurūpabhedāttvamiha vibhāsi guṇātrayānuvṛttaḥ /
raviriva jalapūritodapātreṣvamarapatistutipātramīśamīḍe // 52 //

52. It is you who appear in the three forms of Hari (Vishnu, the sustainer), the one who was born atop a divine lotus (Brahma, the creator), and Shambhu (Shiva, the concluder of creation) due to the predominance of any one of the three 'Gunas' over the others, even as the same sun appears to be different and numerous when it is reflected in a number of pans filled with water. I sing a hymn in your honour who are worthy of being praised, revered and honoured even by Indra (the king of Gods), and are a personification of the supreme transcendental Lord (52).

[The three ‘Gunas’ are the inherent qualities and characteristics in a creature that determine its nature, inclinations, temperaments, behaviours and conducts. They have been classified as—‘Satva’ which is the 1st quality which is positive and characterized by noble virtues and inclinations; ‘Raj’ is the 2nd quality producing worldly desires and passions; while ‘Tama’ is the 3rd and lowest quality producing evils, vices, sins, perversions etc.]

रतिपतिशतकोटिसुन्दराङ्गं शतपथगोचरभावनाविदूरम् ।
यतिपतिहृदये सदा विभातं रघुपतिमार्तिहरं प्रभुं प्रपद्ये ॥५३॥

ratipatiśatakoṭisundarāṅgaṃ śatapathagocarabhāvanāvidūram /
yatipatihṛdaye sadā vibhātaṃ raghupatimārtiharaṃ prabhuṃ prapadye
// 53 //

53. Your divine body is more stunningly and magnificently charming, attractive, handsome, magnificent, radiant and endowed with a divine glow than that of crores (millions) of Kamdeo-cupids (literally the husband of Rati) taken collectively. You are very far away from or inaccessible to those who are confused and perplexed by, or remain entangled in, the web representing pursuit of hundreds of paths or means leading to attainment of emancipation and salvation, instead of concentrating on the righteous and correct path leading to the awareness of your truthful and real form (as described in the Shathpath Brahman of the Shukla Yajur Veda and expounded and elucidated in the Brihad Aranykya Upanishad of that Veda). [That is, you are attainable by realising your true form by following the righteous path of self realisation and devotion as affirmed in the Upanishads.] You are always present and experienced by exalted ascetics in their hearts. I bow most reverentially at the holy and venerated feet of great Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram) who is such a benevolent and unparalleled eliminator of miseries, grief, distress, agonies, troubles and tribulations of all kinds (53).’

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(4.9) Lord Ram’s Stotra by Gandharva

This hymn appears in the holy book ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan’s Aranya Kand (Chapter 3), Canto (Sarga) 9, from verse nos. 30-54.

After giving deliverance to Jatau, Lord Ram moved ahead in the forest on his ownward journey to Kishkindha where he would meet the monkey king and his companions who would eventually help the Lord to conquer Lanka and eliminate the cruel demons. On the way he met a demon named Kabandha. This demon resembled a modern-day octopus—he had only an abdomen with a hole for a mouth, and

protruberances for the limbs. Lord Ram freed Kabandha from this suffering by killing his gross body. Kabandha reverted to his original form of a Gandarva, a type of semi-god regarded as musicians of the heaven. Upon finding deliverance from this curse, the Gandarva offered his reverential obeisance to the Lord with the following hymn—

गन्धर्व उवाच

स्तोतुमुत्सहते मेऽद्य मनो रामातिसम्भ्रमात् । त्वामनन्तमनाद्यन्तं मनोवाचामगोचरम् ॥३०॥

gandharva uvāca

stotumutsahate me'dya mano rāmātisambhramāt /
tvāmanantamanādyantaṁ manovācāmagocaram // 30 //

30. The Kabandh-turned-Gandharva said (prayed) reverentially to Sri Ram, ‘Oh Sri Ram! Today my mind is very eager to say your prayers in the form of a Stotra (a devotional hymn). You are eternal, without a beginning or end, and are not the subject matter within the reach of the mind or speech (i.e. the mind and intellect cannot fathom you, they cannot comprehend and understand you; similarly the speech cannot define you, it is unable to articulate about you in any way) (30).

सूक्ष्मं ते रूपमव्यक्तं देहद्वयविलक्षणम् । दृग्रूपमितरत्सर्वं दृश्यं जडमनात्मकम् ।
तत्कथं त्वां विजानीयादव्यतिरिक्तं मनः प्रभो ॥३१॥

sūkṣmaṁ te rūpamavyaktaṁ dehadvayavilakṣaṇam /
dṛgrūpamitaratsarvaṁ dṛśyaṁ jaḍamanātmakam /
tatkathaṁ tvāṁ vijānīyādvayatiriktaṁ manaḥ prabho // 31 //

31. Oh Lord! Your real/true self (form), encompassing both the subtle and the minute as well as gross and the vast forms of the creation (in the form of Hiranyagarbh and the Viraat respectively), is very strange, mysterious, fascinating, spectacular and wondrous so much so that even the ones who can peer into the minutest of things by their mystical powers of deep insight and penetrating intellect (such as the wise and enlightened Yogis or ascetics) are unable to understand and comprehend that form which has no attributes, no name and no form. That glorious form is an embodiment of supreme Gyan (or enlightenment, wisdom, knowledge of the truth, realisation of the hidden truth). Whatever is there except (or besides) you is par se dead, lifeless, inane, meaningless and gross, it is an imaginary sight like a mirage which appears true but is not in reality, and it is ‘non-Atma’ (that is, not the reality, is not truthful, is not conscious, is not eternal, is not blissful, in short does not possess any of the characters of the Atma). Hence, since the Mana (the mind-intellect-heart complex which governs the thoughts and emotions of a creature) is separate from you as it constitutes the subtle body of a creature—how can it even endeavour to know or comprehend you? (31).

बुद्ध्यात्माभासयोरैक्यं जीव इत्यभिधीयते । बुद्ध्यादि साक्षी ब्रह्मैव तस्मिन्निर्विषयेऽखिलम् ॥३२॥

buddhyātmābhāsayoraikyam jīva ityabhidhīyate /
buddhyādi sākṣī brahmaiva tasminnirviṣaye'khilam // 32 //

32. Jiva (the living being; the creature) is the combined form or the resultant product of the intellect interacting with the pure consciousness present in the body of a creature. In other words, the body becomes alive when the subtle body consisting of both the mind-intellect apparatus works in conjunction with the causal body in which the illuminated entity called the pure conscious Atma lives; the existence of a living entity depends on these two (mind-intellect and consciousness) working together. The orchestra played by them creates an entity called a 'Jiva'.

Brahm (the supreme, transcendental, conscious Soul) is the only witness to Buddhi (the mind-intellect complex; the faculty of reasoning and thought) etc. It is not the subject matter to be comprehended, understood or grasped and discussed, debated or articulated by either the mind or the speech respectively (32).

[The mind and intellect are akin to the north and south poles of a magnet, because both work in unison and together they ascribe the magnet its characteristic virtues and qualities. But the value of the magnet is its power to attract which cannot be seen and touched; it can be experienced and witnessed by observing the magnet at work. This inherent power of the magnet is like the Atma, for without this power of attracting iron, the magnet would be useless. Similarly, while the mind and intellect rely on proof, experimentation and logic, the Lord can be experienced in the heart of the creature, but he cannot be proved as such by physical touch and sight. The inherent quality of the magnet to attract is on display openly, but if one tries to break that piece of magnet open and see where the hidden power is, he is a fool of the highest order. Likewise, a Jiva or a living entity also shows all the signs of life and powers to act intelligently, but the authority to do so comes from the Brahm, the supreme Regulator and Authority of creation, present in its bosom as its pure consciousness Atma. In this example, the magnet is the gross body of the creature, the north and the south poles are the mind and intellect, while the powers to attract iron inherent in the magnet is the Atma.]

आरोप्यतेऽज्ञानवशान्निर्विकारेऽखिलात्मनि । हिरण्यगर्भस्ते सूक्ष्मं देहं स्थूलं विराट् स्मृतम् ॥३३॥

āropyate'jñānavaśānnirvikāre'khilātmani /
hiraṇyagarbhaste sūkṣmaṁ dehaṁ sthūlaṁ virāṭ smṛtam
// 33 //

33. Due to ignorance and lack of correct and truthful knowledge, this whole animate as well as inanimate world is imposed on him who is faultless, eternal and changeless as well as without any form, name and attributes. He is the supreme Soul of the creation that is all pervading and all encompassing. Your subtle, minute, macrocosmic form is called Hiranyagarbh, while your gross macrocosmic form is called Viraat (33).

[When the creation began to take shape, the cosmic egg that was formed was called Hiranyagarbh. When the cosmic body developed and emerged from it upon its maturity, it was called Viraat, literally meaning huge, colossus, vast and all enveloping. From this Viraat emerged the rest of the creation just like branches of a tree branch out from a single stem called its trunk. The creation resembled its parent to the dot, even as the branches of a tree replicate the main tree complete with its side branches and tender leaves. The Hiranyagarbh and Viraat were the macro level of the body of Brahm, while the visible creation was its micro counterpart. The Brahm itself was like the Atma or soul of the creature. Without the soul no one survives, and so no creation has any existence without Brahm. The process of evolution of the creation from Brahm has been extensively described in various Upanishads.]

भावनाविषयो राम सूक्ष्मं ते ध्यातृमङ्गलम्। भूतं भव्यं भविष्यच्च यत्रेदं दृश्यते जगत्॥३४॥

bhāvanāviṣayo rāma sūkṣmaṁ te dhyātṛmaṅgalaṁ /
bhūtaṁ bhavyaṁ bhaviṣyacca yatredaṁ drśyate jagat // 34 //

34. Your subtle, ethereal, sublime, esoteric and minute form—which is inherent in one's heart as 'consciousness' can only be experienced by deeply concentrating upon it as during meditation and contemplation. This form subtly and imperceptibly resides in the heart of a creature as its Atma. Awareness of this ethereal form empowers the person with mystical powers so that he can reflect about the past, present and future of the existence. This realisation can nevertheless provide auspiciousness and welfare to those who meditate and contemplate upon you. [In other words, those who try to visualise or concentrate upon you in their hearts get all the benefits arising out of 'actual' realisation. Such persons become aware of the past, the present and the future of this existence.] (34)

स्थूलेऽण्डकोशे देहे ते महदोदिभिरावृते। सप्तभिरुत्तरगुणैर्वैराजो धारणाश्रयः॥३५॥
त्वमेव सर्वकैवल्यं लोकास्तेऽवयवाः स्मृताः। पातालं ते पादमूलं पार्श्विस्तव महातलम्॥३६॥

sthūle'ṇḍakośe dehe te mahadādibhirāvṛte /
saptabhiruttaraguṇairvairājo dhāraṇāśrayaḥ // 35 //
tvameva sarvakaivalyaṁ lokāste'vayavāḥ smṛtāḥ /
pātālaṁ te pādāmūlaṁ pārṣṇistava mahātalaṁ // 36 //

35-36. [Kabandh now describes both the macrocosmic as well as the microcosmic form of the supreme Lord from whom the whole creation has evolved.] Your cosmic gross body called the Viraat evolved from the cosmic egg (called Hiranyagarbha, which represented the cosmic subtle body), which had seven basic elements surrounding its core (Brahm, represented by the cosmic causal body in which was ensconced the conscious Soul) in the form of seven subtle layers. These seven were the fundamentals elements created at the beginning of creation and which formed the basic ingredients that, in various permutations and combinations, formed the entire

cosmos as it is known today. Therefore, the whole world is conceptualized and visualised in your Viraat form; it is believed firmly with conviction that the Viraat is inherently and integrally present in your body, because it is from you that he ultimately evolved (35).

You are the only one the attainment of whom is called 'Moksha' (i.e. liberation and deliverance of the soul from the cycle of transmigration, which leads to its final emancipation and salvation. All the various Lokas (worlds) are but your fractional parts; they are only one or the other part of your vast colossus form represented by Viraat. The 'Patal' (the nether world) is the sole of your feet; the 'Mahaatal' (the 5th region under the surface of the earth) is your heel (36).

[(i) According to Sankhya Shastra and the Purans, Brahma, who is known as 'Swayambhu' (self created in the sense that he had no father or ancestor), created seven elements called 'Vyahriti', viz. Bhuh, Buhvaha, Swaha, Mahaha, Janaha, Tapaha and Satyam respectively which constitute the fundamental elements which formed the gross body of the creation as its core building blocks at the macro level. Encircling this core is the rounded globe called 'earth' which is surrounded by concentric circles constituting of 'water', 'energy' called 'Teja', 'wind or air', 'sky or space', the notions that are described as 'pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness and vanity' collectively called 'Ahankar', and the notions of 'importance, majesty, grandeur, magnificence and lordliness' called collectively as 'Mahattatva'. Each of them was ten times larger than its preceding layer or circle.

The word 'Dharnaa-sraya' simply means to have certain beliefs that form the base for all thoughts and emotions. It is to concentrate on anything or believing and having faith in any concept by making the mind stable and grouted in a set of convictions, without getting confused or embroiled in debates, diversionary and confusing discussions as well as myriad schools of thought and paths. So, put in a simple language, verse no. 35 means this—the world consists of five elements—earth, water, energy (fire), wind (air), sky (space) combined in different permutations and combinations. A wise person is one who does not get distracted or confused by the various myriad shapes this combination produces or presents before the eye of the beholder, but instead he tries to see the basic elements as being one and the same in this vast diverse universe. And since all the creatures are products of these fundamentals consisting of these five elements, which in turn were produced by a single entity called Brahm, the other name of whom is the Atma or soul, there is no difference between the creature and the cosmos. The egg from which the individual creature is born is an exact replica of the cosmic egg from which the whole cosmos evolved. The Brahm of the cosmos is the Atma of the individual creature; conversely, the microcosmic soul of the creature is the same as the macrocosmic soul of the universe. The consciousness which is the 'essential principal' supporting an individual in the microcosmic form (Viswa + Taijasa + Pragna) is the same as the one which pervades the universe in macrocosmic form (Viraat + Hiranyagarbha + Eswara) respectively.]

रसातलं ते गुल्फौ तु तलातलमितीर्यते। जानुनी सुतलं राम ऊरू ते वितलं तथा॥३७॥

rasātalaṃ te gulphau tu talātalamitīryate /
jānunī sutalaṃ rāma ūrū te vitalaṃ tathā // 37 //

37. Oh Sri Ram! The ‘Rasaatal’ (the 6th lower world; hell, the Hades; the underworld) is your ankle joint, the ‘Talaatal’ (the 5th layer which is filled with molten plasma) is your knee joint, the ‘Sutal’ (the 4th layer forming the rocks etc) is your thigh, and the ‘Veetal’ (the 3rd strata of the earth's crust) represents your two large buttocks (37).

अतलं च मही राम जघनं नाभिगं नभः। उरःस्थलं ते ज्योतीषि ग्रीवा ते मह उच्यते॥३८॥

atalaṃ ca mahī rāma jaghanaṃ nābhigaṃ nabhaḥ /
uraḥsthalam te jyotīṣi grīvā te maha ucyate // 38 //

38. ‘Atal’ and ‘Mahi’ (the 2nd and 1st upper crusts of the earth respectively) are your two pelvic girdles (or the waist area), the ‘Bhurlok’ (the empty space, sky above the surface of the earth stretching upto the upper layers of the earth’s atmosphere) is your navel, the brilliant ‘Swarlok’ (the divine heaven or abode of Gods represented by the vast space of the solar system lighted by the splendourous sun) is your chest region, while the ‘Maharlok’ (the great Loka where the great and exalted saints, sages, ascetics and other exalted ones reside in the upper heavens) is your neck (38).

वदनं जनलोकस्ते तपस्ते शङ्खदेशगम्। सत्यलोको रघुश्रेष्ठ शीर्षण्यास्ते सदा प्रभो॥३९॥

vadanaṃ janalokaste tapaste śaṅkhadeśagam /
satyaloko raghuśreṣṭha śīrṣaṇyāste sadā prabho // 39 //

39. Oh Lord who is the most exalted in king Raghu’s clan (i.e. Sri Ram)! The ‘Janlok’ (the world inhabited by, or consisting of, ordinary living beings) is your face, the ‘Tapalok’ (the world where people who do severe Tapa or austerities and penances reside) is your forehead, while the ‘Satyalok’ (the salvation providing truthful abode of Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord, and from where there is no return) is your head (crown) (39).

इन्द्रादयो लोकपाला बाहवस्ते दिशः श्रुती। अश्विनौ नासिके राम वक्त्रं तेऽग्निरुदाहृतः॥४०॥

indrādayo lokapālā bāhavaste diśaḥ śrutī /
aśvinau nāsike rāma vaktram te’gnirudāhṛtaḥ // 40 //

40. Oh Sri Ram! Indra and other Lokpals (custodians of the world) are your arms, the different ‘directions’ are your ears, and the two Ashwini Kumars are the two nostrils, while the ‘fire’ has been called your mouth (40).

चक्षुस्ते सविता राम मनश्चन्द्र उदाहृतः। भ्रूभङ्ग एव कालस्ते बुद्धिस्ते वाक्पतिर्भवेत्॥४१॥

cakṣuste savitā rāma manaścandra udāhṛtaḥ /
bhrūbhaṅga eva kālaste buddhiste vākpatirbhavet // 41 //

41. The 'Sun' is your eye, the Moon is likened to your mind and heart, the Kaal (representing end of anything) is your eyebrow, and Vrihaspati (the Guru of Gods; the planet Jupiter) is your intellect and discriminatory powers (41).

रुद्रोऽहङ्काररूपस्ते वाचश्छन्दांसि तेऽव्यय। यमस्ते दंष्ट्रदेशस्थो नक्षत्राणि द्विजालयः॥४२॥

rudro'haṅkārārūpaste vācaśchandāṁsi te'vyaya /
yamaste daṁṣṭradeśastho nakṣatrāṇi dvijālayaḥ // 42 //

42. The Rudra (one of the eleven forms of Lord Shiva that is responsible for the conclusion of this creation; a symbol of anger, wrath, vengeance, tempest, retribution) is a personified form that Ahankar (a reflection of the notions of ego, pride, haughtiness, arrogance and vanity which incites anger, wrath, vengeance, ill-will and malice) takes¹, the Vedas are your voice, your talks and your speech, Yam (patron God of death and the final judgment) is your jaw (because it spares none), while the Nakshatras (stars, planets, constellations) are the two rows of your teeth (42).

[¹When one has ego, arrogance, haughtiness and pride in him, and for some reason his wishes and desires are not fulfilled, the person becomes angry and wrathful. He will wreak vengeance on anyone who comes in the way of his ambitions.]

हासो मोहकरी माया सृष्टिस्तेऽपाङ्गमोक्षणम्। धर्मः पुरस्तेऽधर्मश्च पृष्ठभाग उदीरितः॥४३॥

hāso mohakarī māyā sṛṣṭiste'pāṅgamokṣaṇam /
dharmaḥ puraste'dharmaśca prṣṭhabhāga udīritaḥ // 43 //

43. Maya (your magnificently stupendous powers of creating delusions), which enchants and captivates all in its magical spell, is your sweet, bewitching, charming and enchanting smile that stuns and hypnotizes everyone; the creation, both the animate as well as the inanimate, is your side ways, oblique, askance glance; Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct) is your fore (front) part, while Adharama (the reverse of Dharma) is your hind (back, rear) part (43).

निमिषोन्मेषणे रात्रिर्दिवा चैव रघूत्तम। समुद्राः सप्त ते कुक्षिर्नाड्यो नद्यस्तव प्रभो॥४४॥

nimiṣonmeṣaṇe rātrirdivā caiva raghūttama /
samudrāḥ sapta te kukṣirṇāḍyo nadyastava prabho // 44 //

44. Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! Night and day are like the blinks of your eyes. Oh Lord! The seven seas are your stomach or abdomen, while the rivers are your veins and nerves (44).

रोमाणि वृक्षौषधयो रेतो वृष्टिस्तव प्रभो। महिमा ज्ञानशक्तिस्ते एवं स्थूलं वपुस्तव॥४५॥

romāṇi vṛkṣauśadhayo reto vṛṣṭistava prabho /
mahimā jñānaśaktiste evaṃ sthūlaṃ vapustava // 45 //

45. Oh Lord! The trees and medicinal herbs (i.e. the plant kingdom) are your body-hairs, the rain is your sperm, and the stupendous strength of wisdom and knowledge is your magnificent glory, marvellous fame and astounding majesty. This is your gross (vast, bulky, massive, macrocosmic, all inclusive and colossus) body (45).

यदस्मिन् स्थूलरूपे ते मनः सन्धार्यते नरैः। अनायासेन मुक्तिः स्यादतोऽन्यन्नहि किञ्चन॥४६॥

yadasmin sthūlarūpe te manaḥ sandhāryate naraiḥ /
anāyāseṇa muktiḥ syādato'nyannahi kiñcana // 46 //

46. If a person concentrates his mind and attention in your vast form incorporating this vast expanse of the universe, he gets delivered (i.e. finds freedom and liberation from the shackles that tie him to the illusions and limitations of this mundane, artificial, deluding and ensnaring world) without any effort. There is no substance or any thing in existence which is distinct or separate or independent or extraneous from this (vast, all-encompassing, massive, grand, majestic and macrocosmic) form of yours (46).

अतोऽहं राम रूपं ते स्थूलमेवानुभावये। यस्मिन्ध्याते प्रेमरसः सरोमपुलको भवेत्॥४७॥

ato'haṃ rāma rūpaṃ te sthūlamevānubhāvaye /
yasminthyāte premarasaḥ saromapulako bhavet // 47 //

47. Hence, oh Sri Ram, I always remember and concentrate my attention upon that vast, all-inclusive and macrocosmic form of yours, the mere remembrance of which thrills the body, and the nectar of devotional affection surges in the heart (47).

तदैव मुक्तिः स्याद्राम यदा ते स्थूलभावकः। तदप्यास्तां तवैवाहमेतद्रूपं विचिन्तये॥४८॥

tadaiva muktiḥ syādrāma yadā te sthūlabhāvakaḥ /
tadapyāstāṃ tavevāhametadrūpaṃ vicintaye // 48 //

48. When any Jiva (living creature) remembers or concentrates upon this Viraat form of yours, he gets instant liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation. [Here meaning that this realisation provides enlightenment and wisdom to the person about your divine, ethereal, all-encompassing form as described by the Vedas and the Upanishads, and this realisation fills him with great devotion for you, which in turn paves for his liberation from the fetters that limit him to this transient, deluding, illusionary and mundane world and provides emancipation and ultimate salvation for his soul. Such a person is called a ‘Gyani’ or the realised and enlightened one’.]

Inspite of this fact, I do not have the need of it (and I do not wish to become a Gyani as such). Instead, I would prefer to concentrate on your divine form in the way I behold it now in your present form as Ram who is standing personally in front of me (i.e. your Saguna form) (48).

धनुर्बाणधरं श्यामं जटावल्कलभूषितम्। अपीच्यवयसं सीतां विचिन्वन्तं सलक्ष्मणम्॥४९॥
 इदमेव सदा मे स्यान्मानसे रघुनन्दन। सर्वज्ञः शङ्करः साक्षात्पार्वत्या सहितः सदा॥५०॥
 त्वद्रूपमेवं सततं ध्यायन्नास्ते रघूत्तम। मुमूर्षूणां तदा काश्यां तारकं ब्रह्मवाचकम्॥५१॥

dhanurbāṇadharaṃ śyāmaṃ jaṭāvalkalabhūṣitam /
 apīcyavayasaṃ sītāṃ vicinvantaṃ salakṣmaṇam // 49 //
 idameva sadā me syānmānase raghunandana /
 sarvajñaḥ śaṅkaraḥ sāṅkṣātpārvatyaḥ sahitaḥ sadā // 50 //
 tvadrūpamevaṃ satataṃ dhyāyannāste raghūttama /
 mumūrṣūṇāṃ tadā kāśyāṃ tāraṇam brahmavācakaṃ // 51 //

49-51. It is my earnest prayer that this visible divine form of yours holding a bow and arrow, dark complexioned, adorned with matted lock of hairs and clothes made of birch, of a youthful body as an young adult, and going out with Laxman in search of Sita (49), oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram), should always reside (remain enshrined) in my heart.

Oh the most exalted one in the clan of king Raghu (Sri Ram)! The wise and omniscient Lord Shiva along with Parvati (50) always concentrates and meditates upon, remembers and thinks about, and remains engrossed in this divine, radiant, marvellous and majestic form of yours. He perennially and constantly preaches the unique emancipation and salvation providing divine Mantra called ‘Tarak’—which consists of your divine name ‘Ram’ and which is synonymous with and equivalent to Brahm (the supreme Soul of the creation; the pure consciousness of the creation that is the ultimate Truth and the absolute Reality in creation; the supreme transcendental Lord God)—to those dying at Kashi (Varanasi) to provide them with easy means of salvation (51).

रामरामेत्युपदिशन्सदा सन्तुष्टमानसः। अतस्त्वं जानकीनाथ परमात्मा सुनिश्चितः॥५२॥

rāmarāmetypadiśansadā santuṣṭamānasaḥ /
 atastvaṃ jānakīnātha paramātmā suniścitaḥ // 52 //

52. While doing so, he always remains contented in his heart, as well as submerged and intoxicated mentally in supreme and undiluted bliss, happiness, peace and tranquility obtained by constantly remembering you and having devotion for you.

Hence, oh the Lord of Janki, you are verily the Parmatma (supreme Soul, the supreme transcendental Lord) himself (52).

सर्वे ते मायया मूढास्त्वां न जानन्ति तत्त्वतः। नमस्ते रामभद्राय वेधसे परमात्मने॥५३॥

sarve te māyayā mūḍhāstvām na jānanti tattvataḥ /
namaste rāmaḥbhadrāya vedhase paramātmāne // 53 //

53. Your actual, real, essential and truthful nature and form is not easily known, understood, comprehended, grasped or realised by all because they are enchanted, captivated, entangled, deluded and held under the magical spell by your delusion creating powers called Maya.

Oh the honourable Parmatma (supreme, cosmic, universal Soul) Sri Ram who is the creator of the world (universe, cosmos, the entire creation)! I bow most reverentially before you (53).

अयोध्याधिपते तुभ्यं नमः सौमित्रिसेवित। त्राहि त्राहि जगन्नाथ मां माया नावृणोतु ते॥५४॥

ayodhyādhīpate tubhyaṁ namaḥ saumitriśevita /
trāhi trāhi jagannātha māṁ māyā nāvṛṇotu te // 54 //

54. Oh the Lord of Ayodhya who is served by the son of Sumitra (i.e. Laxman)! I most reverentially bow before you. Oh Jagannath (i.e. the Lord of the universe)! Save me, save me! Let your Maya not cast its deluding spell or shadow on me (i.e. let me be free from its evil effects so that I can observe and realise the absolute truth about you) (54).’

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(4.10) Lord Ram’s Stotra by Sugriv

This hymn appears in the holy book ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan’s Aranya Kand (Chapter 4), Canto (Sarga) 1, from verse nos. 76-93.

Sugriv was the younger brother of Baali, the king of the monkey race and the ruler of Kishkindha. He was exiled by Baali due to some misunderstanding between the two brothers. Since his banishment, Sugriv lived on the Rishyamook mountain accompanied by his trusted companions such as Hanuman, Jamvant etc.

After providing liberation and deliverance to Kabandha, Lord Ram reached Rishyamook where he met Hanuman, and on his request the Lord befriended Sugriv. It was on this occasion that Sugriv prayed to the Lord with this hymn.

देव त्वं जगतां नाथः परमात्मा न संशयः। मत्पूर्वकृतपुण्यौघैः सङ्गतोऽद्य मया सह॥७६॥

deva tvam jagatām nāthaḥ paramātmā na saṁśayaḥ /
matpūrvakṛtapuṇyaughaiḥ saṅgato'dya mayā saha // 76 //

76. 'Oh Lord! There is no doubt that you are the Parmatma (supreme Lord) himself who is the Lord of the whole world. It is because of the ripening (maturing, fruition) of all my good, righteous and noble deeds done in the past that I have been able to come in contact with you (76).

त्वां भजन्ति महात्मानः संसारविनिवृत्तये। त्वां प्राप्य मोक्षसचिवं प्रार्थयेऽहं कथं भवम्॥७७॥

tvām bhajanti mahātmānaḥ saṁsāravinivṛttaye /
tvām prāpya mokṣasacivaṁ prārthaye'haṁ katham bhavam
// 77 //

77. Great souls worship and adore you for getting liberation from the shackles of this (mundane, deluding, artificial, transient, treacherous, entangling and entrapping web represented by the) world, then say how can I ever wish for worldly materials and comforts once I have personally met you who bestows emancipation and salvation? [That is, since you remove a person away from worldly attachments and allurements, how can I ask you for such things; it would be highly absurd, foolish and incongruous for me!] (77).

दाराः पुत्रा धनं राज्यं सर्वं त्वन्मायया कृतम्। अतोऽहं देवदेवेश नाकांक्षेऽन्यत्प्रसीद मे॥७८॥

dārāḥ putrā dhanam rājyaṁ sarvaṁ tvaṁmāyayā kṛtam /
ato'haṁ devadeveśa nākāṅkṣe'nyatprasīda me // 78 //

78. Oh the Lord of all the Gods! All this—wife, son, wealth, kingdom etc.—are the creation of your Maya (deluding powers that hold everyone in its spell of magical charm). Hence, I do not have any desire for anything in this world besides you; have grace, benediction and benevolence upon me (78).

आनन्दानुभवं त्वाद्य प्राप्तोऽहं भाग्यगौरवात्। मृदर्थं यतमानेन निधानमिव सत्पते॥७९॥

ānandānubhavaṁ tvādyā prāpto'haṁ bhāgyagauravāt /

mr̥dārthaṃ yatamānena nidhānamiva satpate // 79 //

79. Oh the truthful Lord (Sri Ram)! You are an image of bliss, happiness, contentedness, peace and tranquility. Even as a fortunate one finds a treasure trove while digging the ground, I am similarly very fortunate to have your divine view (Darshan) today (79).

अनाद्यविद्यासंसिद्धं बन्धनं छिन्नमद्य नः। यज्ञदानतपःकर्मपूर्तेष्टादिभिरप्यसौ ॥८०॥

anādyavidyāsaṃsiddhaṃ bandhanaṃ chinnaṃadya naḥ /
yajñādānatapaḥkarmapūrteṣṭādibhirapyasau // 80 //

80. My ties (fetters, shackles, entrapments) originating from ignorance and delusions from times immemorial have been cut (i.e. eliminated, removed)² today. This shackle that ties a creature to the (mundane, deluding, artificial, transient, entangling and treacherous) world is not broken (or eliminated, removed) even by the means of doing Yagya (religious sacrifices), doing Daan (giving charities, alms, donations), and doing Tapa (austerities and penances, suffering hardships for spiritual pursuits), as well as upon fulfilment of desires etc. (80).

न जीर्यते पुनर्दार्ढ्यं भजते संसृतिः प्रभो। त्वत्पाददर्शनात्सद्यो नाशमेति न संशयः॥८१॥

na jīryate punardārdhyaṃ bhajate saṃsṛtiḥ prabho /
tvatpādadarśanātsadyo nāśameti na saṃśayaḥ // 81 //

81. On the contrary, they go on progressively becoming more stubborn, robust and strong. But they are destroyed as soon as one has divine Darshan of your holy lotus-feet—there is no doubt about it (81).

क्षणार्धमपि यच्चित्तं त्वयि तिष्ठत्यचञ्चलम्। तस्याज्ञानमनर्थानां मूलं नश्यति तत्क्षणात्॥८२॥

kṣaṇārdhamapi yaccittaṃ tvayi tiṣṭhatyacañcalam /
tasyājñānamanarthhānāṃ mūlaṃ naśyati tatkṣaṇāt // 82 //

82. He, whose mind, heart and intellect becomes fixed (i.e. steadfast, unwavering and concentrated) upon your true form and nature even for half-a-moment, his ignorance, which is the root cause of all misfortunes, calamities, tragedies and uncalled for and unwarranted consequences are destroyed instantly (82).

तत्तिष्ठतु मनो राम त्वयि नान्यत्र मे सदा॥८३॥

tattiṣṭhatu mano rāma tvayi nānyatra me sadā // 83 //

83. Hence, oh Sri Ram, bless me that my mind-heart apparatus should always be following you, should remain engrossed or involved in your constant thoughts, and it should not leave you and wander anywhere else (83).

रामरामेति यद्वाणी मधुरं गायति क्षणम्। स ब्रह्महा सुरापो वा मुच्यते सर्वपातकैः॥८४॥

rāmarāmeti yadvāṇī madhuraṃ gāyati kṣaṇam /
sa brahmahā surāpo vā mucyate sarvapātakaiḥ // 84 //

84. Those whose tongue sings or chants 'Ram, Ram' sweetly even for a moment, they are freed from all the sinful consequences of being killers of Brahmins or being indulgent drunkards (84).

न काङ्क्षे विजयं राम न च दाससुखादिकम्। भक्तिमेव सदाकाङ्क्षे त्वयि बन्धविमोचनीम्॥८५॥

na kāṅkṣe vijayaṃ rāma na ca dārasukhādikam /
bhaktimeva sadākāṅkṣe tvayi bandhavimocanīm // 85 //

85. Oh Sri Ram! I do not have the desire to win over Vaali anymore or retrieve my wife or any other comforts and pleasures now. The only thing which I desire now is your Bhakti (devotion, submission, dedication, worship, faith, adoration, conviction etc. in you) that cuts through (destroys, eliminates) the ties of this world that act as fetters which shackle and pillory me in their vice like grip (85).

त्वन्मायाकृतसंसारस्त्वदंशोऽहं रघूत्तम। स्वपादभक्तिमादिश्य त्राहि मां भवसङ्कटात्॥८६॥

tvanmāyākṛtasaṃsārastvadaṃśo'haṃ raghūttama /
svapādabhaktimādiśya trāhi māṃ bhavasankṛtāt // 86 //

86. Oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! This world is the apparent creation (manifestation) of your Maya (deluding powers as well as the cosmic creative energy), and me, too, is but only your fraction (i.e. an image of your true self). Hence, by giving/bestowing/granting to me devotion and faith in your holy feet, you can save me from the horrors and torments of this horrifying (deluding, entrapping and tormenting mundane) world (86).

पूर्वं मित्रार्युदासीनास्त्वन्मायावृतचेतसः। आसन्मेऽद्य भवत्पाददर्शनादेव राघव॥८७॥
सर्वं ब्रह्मैव मे भाति क्व मित्रं क्व च मे रिपुः। यावत्त्वन्मायया बद्धस्तावद्गुणविशेषता॥८८॥

pūrvam mitrāryudāsīnāstvanmāyāvṛtacetasaḥ /
 āsanme'dya bhavatpādadarśanādeva rāghava // 87 //
 sarvam brahmaiva me bhāti kva mitram kva ca me ripuḥ /
 yāvattvanmāyā baddhastāvadguṇaviśeṣatā // 88 //

87-88. In the beginning, when my mind-intellect-heart complex was surrounded (enveloped, covered, encased, sheathed) by your Maya, I distinguished between those who were my friend, my foe and who were neutral. But, oh Raghav, now that I have seen the holy feet of the Lord (87), all are experienced or perceived by me as an image or an embodiment of the supreme, transcendental Brahm (the Supreme Being). Who is my friend and who is my enemy in this world? As long as the creature is tied to your Maya (delusions, ignorance), he is affected by the effects of the three qualities of Satva etc. (the others being Raja and Tama) (88).

सा यावदस्ति नानात्वं तावद्भवति नान्यथा। यावन्नानात्वमज्ञानात्तावत्कालकृतं भयम्॥८९॥

sā yāvadasti nānātvam tāvadbhavati nānyathā /
 yāvannānātvamajñānāttāvatkālakṛtaḥ bhayam // 89 //

89. Only till the time the effects and influences of Maya (delusions, ignorance, misconceptions, hallucinations etc.) last does the distinction of a friend and a foe exist. As soon as it is removed, all differentiations vanish. As long as this distinction, originating out of ignorance, exists, only till then there is the fear of death (89).

अतोऽविद्यामुपास्ते यः सोऽन्धे तमसि मज्जति। मायामूलमिदं सर्वं पुत्रदारादिबन्धनम्।
 तदुत्सारय मायां त्वं दासीं तव रघूत्तम॥९०॥

ato'vidyāmupāste yaḥ so'ndhe tamasi majjati /
 māyāmūlamidaḥ sarvam putradārādibandhanam /
 tadutsāraya māyāḥ tvaḥ dāsīm tava raghūttama // 90 //

90. This is why those persons who 'worship' ignorance (i.e. pursue or respect it, or believe it to be real, and pursue those things that have their existence due to ignorance, desire and yearn for such things) keep lying in great darkness. These worldly ties (attachments) of son and wife etc. are all due to ignorance, misconceptions and delusions.

Hence, oh the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram)! Remove this Maya—which is your maid servant (i.e. which is subservient to you, is under your command, is your subordinate Vassal)—from us (i.e. let us be free from its clutches) (90).

त्वत्पादपद्मर्पितचित्तवृत्तिस्त्वनामसङ्गीतकथासु वाणी।
 त्वद्भक्तसेवानिरतौ करौ मे त्वदङ्गसङ्गं लभतां मदङ्गम्॥९१॥

tvatpādapadmārpitacittavṛttistvannāmasaṅgītakathāsu vāṇī /
tvadbhaktasevāniratau karau me tvadaṅgasaṅgaṃ labhatām madaṅgaṃ
// 91 //

91. The inclination (i.e. inherent and natural tendency) of my mind, heart and intellect should always be focused (transfixed, concentrated and unwaveringly engrossed and involved) in your lotus-like feet. My voice and faculty of speech should always be involved in singing your glorious and holy name, and narrating and discussing your divine stories and deeds. My hands should always be involved in the service of your devotees. My gross body should be in touch with you (i.e. on the excuse of serving your feet, I should always remain near your divine form) (91).

त्वन्मूर्तिभक्तान् स्वगुरुं चक्षुः पश्यत्वजस्रं स शृणोतु कर्णः।
त्वज्जन्मकर्माणि च पादयुग्मं ब्रजत्वजस्रं तव मन्दिराणि॥९२॥

tvanmūrtibhaktān svagurum ca cakṣūḥ paśyatvajasraṃ sa śṛṇoti
karṇaḥ /
tvajjanmakarmāṇi ca pādayugmaṃ vrajatvajasraṃ tava mandirāṇi
// 92 //

92. My eyes should always behold your divine image, your devotees and my Guru (moral teacher). My ears should always hear about the various marvellous worldly stories of your different incarnations. My legs should always go for pilgrimage (i.e. to your holy cities and temples) (92).

अङ्गानि ते पादरजोविमिश्रतीर्थानि विभ्रत्वहिशत्रुकेतो।
शिरस्त्वदीयं भवपङ्कजाद्यैर्जुष्टं पदं राम नमत्वजस्रम्॥९३॥

aṅgāni te pādarajovimīśratīrthāni bibhratvahiśatruketo /
śirastvādīyaṃ bhavapadmajādyairjuṣṭaṃ padaṃ rāma namatvajasraṃ
// 93 //

93. My body should bear the holy water containing the dust of your feet [this means that the ‘Tilak’ on my forehead should be made by a paste containing dust and water used to wash your holy feet]. Oh the one who rides on the Garud i.e. Lord Vishnu (or the one whose flag or standard has the mark of Garud, the legendary eagle or heron)! Let my body always bow before your feet which are worshipped, served and adored even by Lords Shiva, Brahma and other Gods (93).’

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(4.11) Lord Ram's Stotra by Swayam Prabha

This hymn appears in the holy book 'Adhyatma Ramayan' written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan's Kishkindha Kand (Chapter 4), Canto (Sarga) 6, from verse nos. 60-77.

When the monkey army that had gone out in search of Sita reached the shores of the ocean, they entered a deep cave. There they found Swayam-prabhaa doing meditation on Lord Ram. She was a hermitress, and was so named because her whole body effused a holy glow because of her purity and holiness acquired by meditation and contemplation. She welcomed the monkeys and after blessing them that they are sure to find Sita, she went to where Lord Ram was at the Rishyamook Mountain. She prayed to the Lord with this hymn before finding her salvation and emancipation.

कृत्वा प्रदक्षिणं रामं प्रणम्य बहुशः सुधीः। आह गद्गदया वाचा रोमाञ्चिततनूरुहा ॥६०॥

kr̥tvā pradakṣiṇaṃ rāmaṃ praṇamya bahuśaḥ sudhīḥ /
āha gadgadayā vācā romāñcitatanūruhā // 60 //

60. She (Swayam-prabhaa) circumambulated Sri Ram repeatedly and became thrilled in body. She prayed with an emotionally choked voice (60).

दासी तवाहं राजेन्द्र दर्शनार्थमिहागता। बहुवर्षसहस्राणि तप्तं मे दुश्चरं तपः ॥६१॥
गुहायां दर्शनार्थं ते फलितं मेऽद्य तत्तपः। अद्य हि त्वां नमस्यामि मायायाः परतः स्थितम् ॥६२॥
सर्वभूतेषु चालक्ष्यं बहिरन्तरवस्थितम्। योगमायाजवनिकाच्छन्नो मानुषविग्रहः ॥६३॥

dāsī tavāhaṃ rājendra darśanārthamihāgatā /
bahuvarṣasahastrāṇi taptaṃ me duścaraṃ tapaḥ // 61 //
guhāyāṃ darśanārthaṃ te phalitaṃ me'dya tattapaḥ /
adya hi tvāṃ namasyāmi māyāyāḥ parataḥ sthitaṃ // 62 //
sarvabhūteṣu cālakṣyaṃ bahirantaravasthitaṃ /
yogamāyājavanikācchanno mānuṣavigrahaḥ // 63 //

61-63. 'Oh King of kings (Lord Sri Ram)! I am your devoted maid servant and have come here to have your Darshan. It is because I desired to have this privilege that I have stayed in a cave and have done severe austerities and penances for thousands of years. That effort has been successful and duly rewarded today. Ah! What a fortunate and auspicious day it is for me today that I am bowing personally to the Lord who is beyond Maya (delusion creating powers and its illusion-creating effects causing the huge trap of ignorance leading to hallucinations, misconceptions and misgivings of horrible nature), and who is present invisibly but inherently and as an integral part of all the elements (such as air, fire, earth, space, wind) in creation, both inside and outside of them (i.e. encompasses them all, and is universally present in all them

uniformly). You have willingly sheathed (covered, enveloped, veiled) your pure-self with your ‘Yogmaya’ (the great deluding powers of the Lord which was literally created by him through the medium of Yoga or meditation which he did prior to the creation coming into being, and which empowered him with the stupendous cosmic powers of creation, sustenance and annihilation that came to be known as Nature). As a result you have manifested yourself in a human form (because you had done Yoga to acquire this magical powers that enabled you not only to assume a form that has a gross body, though basically you have no form, but also to keep your truthful identity hidden from view and understanding; that is why no one has been able to recognize you in spite of living so close to you and interacting with you personally) (60-63).

न लक्ष्यसेऽज्ञानदृशां शैलूष इव रूपधृक् । महाभागवतानां त्वं भक्तियोगविधित्सया ॥६४॥

na lakṣyase’jñānadr̥śāṃ śailūṣa iva rūpadhr̥k /
mahābhāgavatānāṃ tvam bhaktiyogavidhitsuṣyā // 64 //

64. Even as a magician who has assumed an invisible form (i.e. has vanished from sight by using his magical tricks) is not seen by ordinary people who have been hypnotized by him, your eternal, true, attributeless, sublime, subtle and ethereal form is not visible (perceived) by them who are ignorant, unwise and not enlightened. You have incarnated/manifested yourself to establish the rules and fundamental principles for Bhakti (submission, humility, devotion, adoration, worship, dedication, reverence, faith, conviction and belief in divinity and God) which is to be pursued (adopted, followed) by those who are your ardent, sincere and great devotees (64).

अवतीर्णोऽसि भगवन् कथं जानामि तामसी । लोके जानातु यः कश्चित्तव तत्त्वं रघूत्तम ॥६५॥

avatīrṇo’si bhagavan katham jānāmi tāmasī /
loke jānātu yaḥ kaścittava tattvam raghūttama // 65 //

65. Hence, how can I, who am of a ‘Tam’ dominated mind-intellect complex, ever come to know you? Oh the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram)! Let those who consider themselves as erudite, sagacious, knowledgeable, educated and learned ones who have deeply studied the scriptures and have learned about the basic truth of existence, the Lord and the Atma say that they know about your supreme, essential and truthful nature/form (as the supreme entity that has no name, no form, no attributes, no honours and no titles, and which is invisible and indiscernible and imperceptible); let them have their way (65).

ममैतदेव रूपं ते सदा भातु हृदालये । राम ते पादयुगलं दर्शितं मोक्षदर्शनम् ॥६६॥

mamaitadeva rūpaṃ te sadā bhātu hṛdālaye /
rāma te pādayugalaṃ darśitaṃ mokṣadarśanam // 66 //

66. But as far as I am considered, let your present form (that is visible, attractive and enchanting with a bewitching smile, and which has done such great deeds and set such great examples for his devotees to follow and emulate, and which is easier to worship and adore and serve) reside in the abode of my heart forever. Oh Sri Ram! Today I have had the holy, divine and august Darshan (view) of these lotus-like feet of yours, the sight of which is able to provide emancipation and salvation to all (66).

अदर्शनं भवार्णानां सन्मार्गपरिदर्शनम् । धनपुत्रकलत्रादिविभूतिपरिदर्पितः ।
अकिञ्चनधनं त्वाद्य नभिधातुं जनोऽर्हति ॥६७॥

adarśanaṃ bhavārṇānāṃ sanmārgaparidarśanam /
dhanaputrakalatṛādivibhūtiparidarpitaḥ /
akiñcanadhanam tvādya nābhidhātum jano'rhati // 67 //

67. These divine, holy and august feet of yours are capable of helping one to cross over this river-like mundane world and can enlighten one on the path of righteousness, truthfulness, propriety and probity. Those people who are intoxicated with pride and ego, who are arrogant and haughty of their worldly wealth and prosperity, their sons and wife, their virtues, expertise, qualities and excellence, their dignity, majesty and glory—they cannot pray to you because you are the only asset of those who are penniless and have-nots (67).

[Note—This verse emphasizes that the Lord is inaccessible to those who are boastful and arrogant of themselves and their achievements. This is reflective of the Christ's assertion that the kingdom of God belongs to the humble and meek when he said—'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Holy Bible, St. Matthew, 5/5, 8)]

निवृत्तगुणमार्गाय निष्किञ्चनधनाय ते ॥६८॥

nivṛttagaṇamārgāya niṣkiñcanadhanāya te // 68 //

68. You are beyond the reach of various virtues and qualities (i.e. you cannot be measured and assessed by these yardsticks), and you are the asset (wealth) of the have-nots and those who have no worldly resources at their disposal (for they find succour and solace in you, they find in you their Godfather for you are very munificent, benevolent and magnanimous towards penniless and unfortunate ones) (68).

नमः स्वात्माभिरामाय निर्गुणाय गुणात्मने । कालरूपिणमीशानमादिमध्यान्तवर्जितम् ॥६९॥
समं चरन्तं सर्वत्र मन्ये त्वां पुरुषं परम् । देव ते चेष्टितं कञ्चिन्न वेद नृविडम्बनम् ॥७०॥

namaḥ svātmābhirāmāya nirguṇāya guṇātmane /
kālarūpiṇamīśānamādimadhyāntavarjitam // 69 //

samaṁ carantaṁ sarvatra manye tvāṁ puruṣaṁ param /
deva te ceṣṭitaṁ kaścinna veda nṛṣiḍambanam // 70 //

69-70. I bow reverentially and pay my obeisance to you who remains ever contented by meditating on his pure self and dwells permanently in it, and who is essentially 'Nirguna' (formless, nameless and without any attributes) but is imagined as having a 'Saguna' form (which is the opposite of Nirguna—i.e. it is visualized that you have a form, have attributes and a name).

I regard you as the controller of all that exists in this creation in your form as 'Kaal' (time, circumstance, period, end and death). You are without a beginning, middle or an end (69), are universally all-pervading and uniformly omnipresent, and are the supreme transcendental Purush (i.e. the macrocosmic Male aspect of Nature; the Viraat Purush).

Oh Lord! The tricks that you play as a human are so mysteriously strange, stupendously magnificent and fascinating, and marvellously glorious that no one can know their secret and fathom them (70).

न तेऽस्ति कश्चिद्दयितो द्वेष्यो वापर एव च । त्वन्मायापिहितात्मानस्त्वां पश्यन्ति तथाविधम् ॥७१॥

na te'sti kaściddayito dveṣyo vāpara eva ca /
tvanmāyāpihitātmānastvāṁ paśyanti tathāvidham // 71 //

71. You have no one who is your favourite, opposed to you or indifferent to you (i.e. you are equitable towards all and do not distinguish between any one based upon his birth, race, religion, caste, creed etc.). Those whose inner-self is sheathed by (i.e. is covered, enveloped or veiled by, is under the influence of) the deluding spell of your magical charm called Maya are the only ones who look upon you (i.e. think about you, see you, perceive you, seek you, worship you and honour you) as per their basic inherent inclinations and tendencies as well as their imaginations and understandings (71).

अजस्याकर्तुरीशस्य देवतिर्यङ्नरादिषु । जन्मकर्मादिकं यद्यत्तदत्यन्तविडम्बनम् ॥७२॥

ajasyākarturīśasya devatiryāṇnarādiṣu /
janmakarmādikaṁ yadyattadatyantaviḍambanam // 72 //

72. You are the supreme transcendental Lord who does not have a birth and who does not do anything (i.e. who remains neutral and dispassionate, who is a renunciate and remains detached from the creation and its various trappings). The various manifestations that you make as a Deva (Gods), a Tiryak (those born as birds and animals) or as a human being and other forms, and then do the various deeds and take the numerous actions in these forms, are nothing else but a mysterious, strange, fascinating and marvellous display of your stupendous glories and maverick potentials which are beyond comprehension and understanding (72).

त्वामाहुरक्षरं जातं कथाश्रवणसिद्धये। केचित्कोसलराजस्य तपसः फलसिद्धये॥७३॥

tvāmāhurakṣaram jātam kathāśravaṇasiddhaye /
kecitkosalarājasya tapasaḥ phalasiddhaye // 73 //

73. It is said by some that you are the imperishable and eternal Lord who has taken birth (i.e. have revealed yourself) in order to spread and establish the importance of hearing your 'Katha' (i.e. your divine and holy stories). Others say that you have taken birth to reward the king of Kaushal (Dashrath) for his severe penances and austerities (Tapa) (73).

कौसल्यया प्रार्थ्यमानं जातमाहुः परे जनाः। दुष्टराक्षसभूभारहरणायार्थितो विभुः॥७४॥
ब्रह्मणा नररूपेण जातोऽयमिति केचन। शृण्वन्ति गायन्ति चे ये कथास्ते रघुनन्दन॥७५॥
पश्यन्ति तव पादाब्जं भवार्णवसुतारणम्। त्वन्मायागुणबद्धाहं व्यतिरिक्तं गुणाश्रयम्॥७६॥

kausalyayā prārthyamānam jātamāhuḥ pare janāḥ /
duṣṭarākṣasabhūbhāraharāṇāyārthito vibhuḥ // 74 //
brahmaṇā nara rūpeṇa jāto'yamiti kecana /
śṛṇvanti gāyanti ca ye kathāste raghunandana // 75 //
paśyanti tava pādābjaṁ bhavārṇavasutāraṇam /
tvanmāyāguṇabaddhāham vyatiriktaṁ guṇāśrayam // 76 //

74-76. Some say that you have manifested yourself due to the prayers of Kaushalya, while according to others, the Vibhu (omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal, almighty Lord) has taken birth as a human to remove the burden of the earth caused by the evil and wicked demons by destroying them (74) at the behest (prayers) of Brahma (the creator). Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Those who shall sing or narrate your divine stories shall surely have a divine vision of your lotus-like holy feet which are like a boat to take one across this mundane, entrapping and deluding world.

Oh Lord! I am under the influence and spell of the deluding powers of your Maya (and their accompanying characteristics and qualities)—say, then how can I ever be able to know (fathom, measure, understand) you who are totally distinct and separate from them and on whom they (i.e. the Maya inspired characteristics) are dependent (75-76).

कथं त्वां देव जानीयं स्तोतुं वा विषयं विभुम्। नमस्यामि रघुश्रेष्ठं बाणासनशरान्वितम्।
लक्ष्मणेन सह भ्राता सुग्रीवादिभिरन्वितम्॥७७॥

katham tvām deva jānīyam stotuṁ vāviṣayaṁ vibhum /
namasyāmi raghuśreṣṭhaṁ bāṇāsanaśarānvitam /
lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātā sugrīvādibhiranvitam // 77 //

77. Similarly, since you are beyond the powers of speech that it can describe or define you, then say oh Lord, how can I praise you or say your prayers. Oh Vibho (omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal and almighty Lord)! I can only most humbly bow reverentially before you who holds a bow and arrow and is the best in king Raghu's clan, along with your brother Laxman and Sugriv etc. (who are your beloved followers and ardent devotees) (77).'

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(4.12) Lord Ram's Stotra by Vibhishan

This hymn appears in the holy book 'Adhyatma Ramayan' written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan's Lanka Kand (Chapter 6), Canto (Sarga) 3, from verse nos. 17-37.

Vibhishan was the younger brother of Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. When he had attempted to persuade Ravana to become reasonable and avoid a ruinous war just because of a woman, in this case Sita, the honourable wife of Lord Ram whom Ravana had abducted earlier, the latter not only sternly rebuked and insulted Vibhishan but also kicked him in open court, telling him to get out of the kingdom forthwith. Seeing this as a god-sent opportunity to surrender before the Lord and seek his blessings as well as protection, Vibhishan came to the place where the Lord had pitched his camp at the Rishymook Mountain in the kingdom of Kishkindha. After preliminary formalities and acceptance of him by the Lord in his camp, Vibhishan prayed to him with the following hymn—

नमस्ते राम राजेन्द्र नमः सीतामनोरम। नमस्ते चण्डकोदण्ड नमस्ते भक्तवत्सल।१७॥

vibhīṣaṇa uvāca

namaste rāma rājendra namaḥ sītāmanorama /
namaste caṇḍakodaṇḍa namaste bhaktavatsala // 17 //

17. Vibhishan said, 'Oh the King of kings, Lord Sri Ram! I bow before you (to pay my respects and honour). Oh the one who resides in the heart of Sita! I bow reverentially before you. Oh the invincible and formidable archer holding an invincible and formidable bow! I bow reverentially before you. Oh the one who is compassionate, benevolent, munificent, benignant and endearing towards his devotees! I bow reverentially before you (17).

नमोऽनन्ताय शान्ताय रामायामिततेजसे। सुग्रीवमित्राय च ते रघूणां पतये नमः।१८॥

namo'nantāya śāntāya rāmāyāmitatejase /
sugrīvamitrāya ca te raghūṇāṃ pataye namaḥ // 18 //

18. I bow before Sri Ram who has no end, is tranquil, peaceful and serene, is unique and matchless in divine splendour, radiance, brilliance, glow of divine energy and majestic powers, is a friend of Sugriv, and is the leader of king Raghu's clan (18).

जगदुत्पत्तिनाशानां कारणाय महात्मने । त्रैलोक्यगुरुवेऽनादिगृहस्थाय नमो नमः ॥१९॥

jagadutpattināśānām kāraṇāya mahātmane /
trailokyagurave'nādigṛhasthāya namo namaḥ // 19 //

19. I repeatedly bow reverentially before you who are a great and exalted soul, are the cause (source) of the creation as well as annihilation of the world, are the Guru (a wise and enlightened teacher, a moral preceptor, an erudite and learned guide, and the one who is the most wise and enlightened) of the Triloki (the three worlds consisting of the subterranean, terrestrial and celestial worlds), and are a householder since time immemorial¹ (19).

[¹The Lord has been called a householder since ancient times because as Viraat Purush, the male aspect of the cosmos and creation, he is associated with Nature, the female aspect, ever since the beginning of creation, and he looks after it as any householder would look after his family which is the creation in his case. In other words, he sustains, nourishes and takes care of this world ever since its creation. In this role, the Viraat Purush has been called Lord Vishnu and Nature or Prakriti has been called Laxmi. That same Vishnu has manifested himself as Ram while Laxmi has come as Sita.]

त्वमादिर्जगतां राम त्वमेव स्थितिकारणम् । त्वमन्ते निधनस्थानं स्वेच्छाचारस्त्वमेव हि ॥२०॥

tvamādirjagatām rāma tvameva sthitikāraṇam /
tvamante nidhanasthānaṁ svecchācārastvameva hi // 20 //

20. Oh Sri Ram! You are the cause of creation and existence of this world, and at the end of it you are the place where it goes back (i.e. merges into or coalesces into) at the time of annihilation (the doomsday). You move around as per your own wish (20).

चराचराणां भूतानां बहिरन्तश्च राघव । व्याप्यव्यापकरूपेण भवान् भाति जगन्मयः ॥२१॥

carācarāṇām bhūtānām bahirantaśca rāghava /
vyāpyavyāpakarūpeṇa bhavān bhāti jaganmayah // 21 //

21. Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! You pervade both inside and outside the whole creation consisting of the five elements (space, air, fire, water, earth). [That is, you encompass

as well as are encompassed by all the animate as well as the inanimate world which is made up of the above elements.]

As a result, the whole universe appears to be a manifestation of your own self, or it is an image which reflects you (21).

त्वन्मायया हृतज्ञाना नष्टोत्मानो विचेतसः। गतागतं प्रपद्यन्ते पापपुण्यवशात्सदा॥२२॥

tvānmāyayā hṛtajñānā naṣṭātmāno vicetasah /
gatāgataṁ prapadyante pāpapuṇyavaśātsadā // 22 //

22. Those foolish, lowly, stupid and ignorant persons, whose wisdom, intelligence and discrimination powers have been eclipsed by your deluding and illusive force called Maya, are constantly and repeatedly arriving and departing, i.e. take birth and die repeatedly in this mundane, artificial, deluding and entrapping world depending upon their righteous or unrighteous deeds, thoughts and demeanors (22).

तावत्सत्यं जगद्भाति शुक्तिकारजतं यथा। यावन्न ज्ञायते ज्ञानं चेतसानन्यगामिना॥२३॥

tāvatsatyam jagadbhāti śuktikārajataṁ tathā /
yāvanna jñāyate jñānaṁ cetasānanyagāminā // 23 //

23. As long as (i.e. till the time) a person does not concentrate his mental faculties and realises and understands your true form representing pure enlightenment, wisdom and knowledge as well as the pure consciousness, he continues to regard this world as being true just like one mistakenly thinks that there is silver that glistens inside an oyster shell. [The moon or sun light reflects from the oyster shell's inner layer and it appears to simmer with a silvery light, but it is only an optical illusion.] (23).

त्वदज्ञानात्सदा युक्ताः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु। रमन्ते विषयान्सर्वान्ते दुःखप्रदान्विभो॥२४॥

tvadajñānātsadā yuktāḥ putradāragṛhādiṣu /
ramante viṣayānsarvānante duḥkhapradānvibho // 24 //

24. Oh Vibho (omnipresent, almighty, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal Lord)! It is because the people are ignorant of you and your true form that they are engrossed in and infatuated and attached with their worldly ties such as their sons, wives and homestead etc., and try to find happiness and peace in the objects of this materialistic but perishable world which ultimately give them sorrows and anguish in return (24).

त्वमिन्द्रोऽग्निर्यमो रक्षो वरुणश्च तथानिलः। कुबेरश्च तथा रुद्रस्त्वमेव पुरुषोत्तम॥२५॥

tvamindro'gniryamo rakṣo varuṇaśca tathānilaḥ /
kuberaśca tathā rudrastvameva puruṣottama // 25 //

25. Oh the most exalted and the best among males ('Purshottam', an epithet for Vishnu)! You are Indra (the king of Gods), the Fire, Yam (the patron God of death), Raksho (literally, the one who protects; also means God, 'good luck' personified), Varun (the patron God of water), the Wind God, Kuber (the treasurer of Gods) and Rudra (one of the eleven forms of Shiva; synonymous with annihilation of the creation) (25).

त्वमणोरप्यणीयांश्च स्थूलात् स्थूलतरः प्रभो। त्वं पिता सर्वलोकानां माता धाता त्वमेव हि॥२६॥

tvamaṇorapyaṇīyāṃśca sthūlāt sthūlataṛaḥ prabho /
tvam pitā sarvalokānām mātā dhātā tvameva hi // 26 //

26. Oh Lord! You are minute than an atom and larger than the greatest of creation. You are the father, the mother and the nourisher as well as the bearer of the entire creation (26).

आदिमध्यान्तरहितः परिपूर्णोऽच्युतोऽव्ययः। त्वं पाणिपादरहितश्चक्षुः श्रोत्रविवर्जितः॥२७॥

ādimadhyāntarahitaḥ paripūrṇo'cyuto'vyayaḥ /
tvam pāṇipādarahitaścakṣuḥ śrotravarjitaḥ // 27 //

27. You are without a beginning, middle or an end. You are always uniformly complete, eternal and imperishable, and infinite and limitless. You are have no physical organs such as hands and legs or eyes and nose (because you are formless and without attributes) (27).

श्रोता द्रष्टा ग्रहीता च जवनस्त्वं खरान्तक। कोशेभ्यो व्यतिरिक्तस्त्वं निर्गुणो निरुपाश्रयः॥२८॥

śrotā draṣṭā grahitā ca javanastvam kharāntaka /
kośebhyo vyatiriktastvam nirguṇo nirupāśrayaḥ // 28 //

28. But still, oh the slayer of the demon Khar, you are the one who hears all, sees all, accepts all and are very swift, rapid moving, diligent and agile. You are free from the encumbrances pertaining to the '5-Koshas'. You are Nirguna (formless, invisible, without any defining characteristics or attributes called 'Gunas' which is so typifies this world). And you have no abode as such (i.e. you are not fixed or localised to any specific location or habitat, because the whole universe is your abode by the virtue of the fact that you are present in all the five elements that constitute the world) (28).

[¹The gross body of all living beings consist of five layers or sheaths that surround his Atma which is his ‘true self’ known as the soul. These five sheaths are respectively called the Anna Maya Kosh or the food sheath, the Pran Maya Kosh or the vital wind sheath, the Mano Maye Kosh or the mental sheath, the Vigyan Maye Kosh or the intellect sheath, and the Anand Maye Kosh or the bliss sheath. The Anna Maye Kosh is the outer-most sheath and the Anand Maye Kosh is the inner-most.]

निर्विकल्पो निर्विकारो निराकारो निरीश्वरः। षड्भावरहितोऽनादिः पुरुषः प्रकृतेः परः॥२९॥

nirvikalpo nirvikāro nirākāro nirīśvaraḥ /
ṣaḍbhāvarahito'nādiḥ puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ // 29 //

29. You have no parallel, no match and no alternatives. You are without any faults, blemishes, shortcomings and taints¹. You have no form, no attributes, no names and no qualifying qualities defining you. You are inspired by none and are self driven; you have no Lord above you who can order you to do anything. You are free from the so-called six faults, shortcomings, blemishes or taints associated with this creation and its creatures¹. You are beyond Nature, called Prakriti. You are the eternal Purush who has no has no beginning or end. [Here ‘Purush’ means the male aspect of nature or the Viraat Purush that existed even prior to the whole creation coming into being) (29).

[¹The six Faults are the problems associated with this gross world that has a physical origin, takes a birth and ultimately ends or dies. Naturally they are not applicable to the supreme Lord who does not take birth and does not die. These so-called ‘Vikars’ are the following—(1) problems associated with birth, (2) problems associated with growth, (3) problems associated with consequences of deeds done and actions taken by a creature in this world, (4) problems associated with gradual decay and decline of the body and its functions, (5) problems associated with old age and its attendant horrors, and (6) problems associated with the ultimate destruction and end of everything that relates to the creature. One will observe that the life of a creature is a continuous graph of sorrows and pains of one or the other kind. It is only when the creature realises the truth of existence and who he really is that he begins to disassociate himself from the body and the world, and thus is able to break free from this seemingly interminable cycle of horrors that are inherent in a transmigratory world ridden by delusions.]

मायया गृह्यमाणस्त्वं मनुष्य इव भाव्यसे। ज्ञात्वा त्वां निर्गुणमजं वैष्णवा मोक्षगामिनः॥३०॥

māyayā gr̥hyamāṇastvaṃ manuṣya iva bhāvyase /
jñātvā tvāṃ nirguṇamajaṃ vaiṣṇavā mokṣagāmināḥ // 30 //

30. You appear to be like an ordinary human being because of the illusion created by your Maya (the delusion creating powers of the Lord). The Vaishnavs (those who worship Lord Vishnu and treat him as the supreme Lord who manifests in the form of various incarnations to rid the world of evil and vices) attain emancipation and

salvation by realizing that, in reality, you as are that supreme Lord who is called ‘Nirguna’, i.e. one who has no Gunas (no attributes and qualifying virtues, either good or bad) and ‘Ajanma’, i.e. one who has no birth (because he is eternal and imperishable) (30).

अहं त्वत्पादसद्भक्तिनिः श्रेणीं प्राप्य राघव। इच्छामि ज्ञानयोगाख्यं सौधमारोढुमीश्वर॥३१॥

aham tvatpādasadbhaktiniḥ śreṇīm prāpya rāghava /
icchāmi jñānayogākhyam saudhamāroḍhumīśvara // 31 //

31. Oh Raghav! I wish to climb up the stairs (or steps of the ladder) representing sincere, steady, everlasting and pure ‘Bhakti’ (i.e. firm devotion, faith, conviction and belief, having reverence and adoration, worshipping and honouring) in your lotus-like holy feet, in order to reach the pinnacle of the royal palace called ‘Gyan Yog’ (enlightenment and wisdom acquired through truthful knowledge of the supreme reality) (31).

नमः सीतापते राम नमः कारुणिकोत्तम। रावणारे नमस्तुभ्यं त्राहि मां भवसागरात्॥३२॥

namaḥ sītāpate rāma namaḥ kāruṇikottama /
rāvaṇāre namastubhyaṁ trāhi mām bhavasāgarāt // 32 //

32. Oh Sita's dear Lord Sri Ram who is the best among those who are merciful, munificent, benevolent and compassionate! I bow reverentially before you. Oh the slayer or vanquisher of Ravana! I repeatedly bow reverentially before you. You should save me from being submerged and getting drowned in the ocean-like mundane world (32).’

ततः प्रसन्नः प्रोवाच श्रीरामो भक्तवत्सलः। वरं वृणीष्व भद्रं ते वाञ्छितं वरदोऽस्म्यहम्॥३३॥

tataḥ prasannaḥ provāca śrīrāmo bhaktavatsalaḥ /
varam vṛṇīṣva bhadraṁ te vāñchitaṁ varado’smyaham
// 33 //

33. Then Sri Ram, who is endearing, munificent and benevolent towards his devotees and passionately loves them said to Vibhishan most delightedly, ‘Oh Vibhishan! You be blessed. I wish to grant you a boon. So ask for whatever you desire.’ (33).

धन्योऽस्मि कृतकृत्योऽस्मि कृतकार्योऽस्मि राघव। त्वत्पाददर्शनादेव विमुक्तोऽस्मि न संशयः॥३४॥

vibhīṣaṇa uvāca

dhanyo'smi kṛtakṛtyo'smi kṛtakāryo'smi rāghava /
tvatpādadarśanādeva vimukto'smi na saṁśayaḥ // 34 //

34. Vibhishan said, 'Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! I have become extremely blessed, privileged and fortunate, have achieved the rewards of all my good actions and virtuous deeds, feel fully satisfied and contented, and whatever I had ever desired or was destined to get, I have got them all. I have already become emancipated and liberated from the shackles of this mundane world by having Darshan (divine and august viewing) of your holy feet. [So there is nothing more left for me to desire.] There is no doubt about it (34).

नास्ति मत्सदृशो धन्यो नास्ति मत्सदृशः शुचिः। नास्ति मत्सदृशो लोके राम त्वन्मूर्तिदर्शनात्॥३५॥

nāsti matsadr̥śo dhanyo nāsti matsadr̥śaḥ śuciḥ /
nāsti matsadr̥śo loke rāma tvanmūrtidarśanāt // 35 //

35. Oh Sri Ram! There is no one more privileged, fortunate and blessed than me because I have had the Darshan of your beautiful, attractive, charming and magnificent image. Now there is no one in this world who can compare himself with me! (35).

कर्मबन्धविनाशाय त्वज्ज्ञानं भक्तिलक्षणम्। त्वद्भ्यानं परमार्थं च देहि मे रघुनन्दन॥३६॥

karmabandhavināśāya tvajjñānaṁ bhaktilakṣaṇam /
tvaddhyānaṁ paramārthaṁ ca dehi me raghunandana
// 36 //

36. Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! [Now Vibhishan makes his request—] In order to destroy the fetters that bind me to my deeds and actions in this world, give me, as a blessing or boon, your Bhakti (devotion, worship, dedication, adoration, reverence and fellowship) which can lead me to achieve Gyan (enlightenment, wisdom and true knowledge about your divine form and essence). At the same time, bless me so that I can meditate and concentrate, contemplate and focus my attention on your spiritual and non-worldly sublime, ethereal, divine and holy form (36).

न याचे राम राजेन्द्र सुखं विषयसम्भवम्। त्वत्पादकमले सक्ता भक्तिरेव सदास्तु मे॥३७॥

na yāce rāma rājendra sukhaṁ viṣayasambhavam /
tvatpādakamale saktā bhaktireva sadāstu me // 37 //

37. Oh the King of kings, Sri Ram! I do not desire any happiness or comforts arising out of the worldly sense objects pertaining to this mundane, materialistic and artificial world which is nevertheless perishable. My only desire is that I must have abiding

love, devotion, affection, reverence, dedication, adoration and faith in your lotus-like august and divine feet (37).’

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(4.13) Lord Ram’s Stotra by the Gods

This hymn appears in the holy book ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan’s Lanka Kand (Chapter 6), Canto (Sarga) 13, from verse nos. 4-7.

After the cruel demons led by their king Ravana were killed by Lord Ram, the Gods had assembled in the sky to pay their tributes to the Lord. They paid their obeisance and showed respects to the Lord with the following hymn—

कर्ता त्वं सर्वलोकानां साक्षी विज्ञानविग्रहः। वसूनामष्टमोऽसि त्वं रुद्राणां शङ्करो भवान्॥४॥

kartā tvaṃ sarvalokānāṃ sākṣī vijñānavigrahaḥ /
vasūnāmaṣṭamo’si tvaṃ rudrāṇāṃ śaṅkaro bhavān // 4 //

4. ‘Oh Lord! You are the active factor that does everything in the entire world, you are the witness to all, you are an embodiment and an image of Vigyan (i.e. of realisation and truthful knowledge of reality, of wisdom and enlightenment), you are the eighth of the different Vasus, and are Lord Shiva amongst the eleven Rudras (4).

[(i) These ‘Vasus’ are the various patron Gods who preside over the essentials of life; they are eight in number—Vishnu is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and ‘Ray’ representing glory and fame. The element ‘Fire’ is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the Vasus. The ‘fire’ element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. But here in the context of Sri Ram, the Gods are referring to Lord Vishnu who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. As Viraat Purush who is the passive male aspect of creation, Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world. Further, since there is no defined list delineating which of the Vasus is the first and which is the eighth, it follows that Lord Ram embodies them all in himself, though primarily he is Lord Vishnu personified. He is as important as gold, one of the Vasus, which is the most precious wealth in the materialistic world.

(ii) Lord Shiva has eleven forms called Rudras. The 11 Rudras are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva—they are Mannu, Manu, Mahinas, Mahaan, Shiva, Ritdhvaj, Ugrareta, Bhava, Kaal, Vaamdeo, and Dhritvrat—Rig Veda 1/43/1. The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened. Hence, Sri Ram is treated as being equivalent as Shiva.]

आदिकर्तासि लोकानां ब्रह्मा त्वं चतुराननः। अश्विनौ घ्राणभूतौ ते चक्षुषी चन्द्रभास्करो ॥५॥

ādikartāsi lokānām brahmā tvaṁ caturānanaḥ /
aśvinau ghrāṇabhūtau te cakṣuṣī candrabhāskarau // 5 //

5. You are the original and primary creator of the entire world in the form of Brahma, the four headed one. Ashvini Kumars are your nose, and the Sun and the Moon are your two eyes (5).

लोकानामादिरन्तोऽसि नित्य एकः सदोदितः। सदा शुद्धः सदा बुद्धः सदा मुक्तोऽगुणोऽद्वयः ॥६॥

lokānāmādiranto'so nitya ekaḥ sadoditaḥ /
sadā śuddhaḥ sadā buddhaḥ sadā mukto'guṇo'dvayaḥ // 6 //

6. You are the beginning and end of the entire creation; you are eternal, everlasting, immutable and unchanging; you are without a birth or death and an image of eternal divine light that remains always lighted and perpetually shining brightly; you are invariably pure, uncorrupt and without any shortcomings, taints, defects, blemishes or faults; you are eternally wise, erudite, skilled, expert, sagacious, realised and enlightened; you are perpetually free and liberated (from all the delusions, entrapments and all other snares of this mundane, delusory and entrapping world); you are without any definitive and describable attributes, form, names and qualities (and hence you are called 'Nirguna'); and you are peerless, matchless, unique, one of your own kind, and without a second or parallel (6).

त्वन्मायासंवृतानां त्वं भासि मानुषविग्रहः। त्वन्नाम स्मरतां राम सदा भासि चिदात्मकः ॥७॥

tvanmāyāsaṁvṛtānām tvaṁ bhāsi mānuṣavigrahaḥ /
tvannāma smaratām rāma sadā bhāsi cidātmakaḥ // 7 //

7. Oh Sri Ram! For those who are surrounded, covered or veiled by a sheath representing your maverick Maya (i.e. are under the influence of and enveloped by your deluding and magical powers that hide the reality and create an imaginary world of deceptions and misconceptions), you appear to be an ordinary man with a physical

gross body, but those who perpetually remember and invoke your holy and divine name, always and without doubt see you as the supreme, eternal, transcendental supreme Consciousness (known as Brahm) (7).’

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(4.14) Lord Ram’s Stotra by Brahma (the Creator)

This hymn appears in the holy book ‘Adhyatma Ramayan’ written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan’s Lanka Kand (Chapter 6), Canto (Sarga) 13, from verse nos. 10-18.

After the Gods, the Creator praised and honoured Lord Ram with the following hymn—

ब्रह्मोवाच

वन्दे देवं विष्णुमशेषस्थितिहेतुं त्वामध्यात्मज्ञानिभिरन्तर्हृदि भाव्यम् ।
हेयाहेयद्वन्द्वविहीनं परमेकं सत्तामात्रं सर्वहृदिस्थं दृशिरूपम् ॥१०॥

brahmovāca

vande devaṃ viṣṇumaśeṣasthithetum
tvāmadhyātmajñānibhirantarhṛdi bhāvyam /
heyāheyadvandvavihīnaṃ paramekaṃ
sattāmātraṃ sarvahr̥disthaṃ dṛśirūpam // 10 //

10. Lord Brahma, the creator said, 'Oh Lord! I pray to you who are Lord Vishnu personified; you are the cause of the very existence of all the creatures; you are enthroned in the heart of self-enlightened or self-realised persons; you are free from the confusions, uncertainties, dilemmas and consternations arising from whether to leave and abandon anything or accept it; you are beyond everything and are without a parallel and match, i.e. you are unique and one like yourself alone; you are the only supreme authority and majesty in the whole world; you reside in the heart of all (in the form of the microcosmic soul); and you are the witness to all that exists (10).

प्राणापानौ निश्चयबुद्ध्या हृदि रुद्ध्वा छित्त्वा सर्वं संशयबन्धं विषयौघान् ।
पश्यन्तीशं यं गतमोहा यतयस्तं वन्दे रामं रत्नकिरीटं रविभासम् ॥११॥

prāṇāpānau niścayabuddhyā hṛdi ruddhvā
chitvā sarvaṃ saṃśayabandhaṃ viṣayaughān /
paśyantiśaṃ yaṃ gatamohā yatayastaṃ
vande rāmaṃ ratnakirīṭaṃ ravibhāsam // 11 //

11. Sages and hermits who are without any worldly attachments, who exert/exercise control over their two vital wind (life) forces—‘Pran and Apaana’—and restrain or check them in their hearts with a firm determination, a concentrated mind and a focused intellect, and who, at the same time, are able to cut through (puncture, destroy, smash, overcome, vanquish, conquer, spike, break or crush) all the shackles representing uncertainties, doubts, confusions and perplexities, as well as overcome the numerous tugs and pulls exerted by various types of infatuations, yearnings and desires for self gratifications and obtaining pleasures of the sense objects pertaining to this materialistic world, which are, however, nothing but harmful poisons—only such sages and hermits can have a divine view of the Lord in their hearts. I bow and pray most reverentially to such a Lord Sri Ram who is adorned by a jewel studded glittering crown with a tiara, and is as majestic, splendorous, radiant and glorious as the Sun (11).

मायातीतं माधवमाद्यं जगदादिं मानातीतं मोहविनाशं मुनिवन्द्यम् ।
योगिध्येयं योगविधानं परिपूर्णं वन्दे रामं रञ्जितलोकं रमणीयम् ॥ १२ ॥

māyātītaṃ mādhamādyam jagadādim
mānātītaṃ mohavināśam munivandyaṃ /
yogidhyeyam yogavidhānam paripūrṇam
vande rāmaṃ rañjitalokaṃ ramaṇīyam // 12 //

12. He who is beyond the influence, spell and reach of Maya (delusions, ignorance, hallucinations and illusions), who is the divine consort of Laxmi (i.e. who is Lord Vishnu himself), who is the original cause of the creation of the world, who is beyond the requirement of visible proof of existence (i.e. who cannot be measured by or compared to any known worldly yardsticks, standards or benchmarks to establish his authenticity and truthfulness), who destroys all Moha (attachments, infatuations, attractions, yearnings and desires) that exist in the world, who is praised by sages, seers and hermits, who is worthy of being meditated upon by the Yogis (ascetics), who is the founder, teacher, author and judge for the path of Yoga (meditation and concentration on the Lord), and who is complete in all respects—I bow most reverentially and humbly pray to that Lord known as Sri Ram who gives happiness, bliss, joy and delight to the whole world, and is most charming, pleasing, enthralling, beguiling and beautiful in every way (12).

भावाभावप्रत्ययहीनं भवमुख्यैर्योगासक्तैरर्चितपादाम्बुजयुगम् ।
नित्यं शुद्धं बुद्धमनन्तं प्रणवाख्यं वन्दे रामं वीरमशेषासुरदावम् ॥ १३ ॥

bhāvābhāvapratyayahīnaṃ bhavamukhyai-
ryogāsaktairarcitapādāmbujayugmam /
nityam śuddham buddhamanantaṃ praṇavākhyam
vande rāmaṃ vīramaśeṣāsuraḍāvam // 13 //

13. He who has no emotions of any kind whatsoever, i.e. who is perpetually neutral and equitable, being unmoved and unwavering, constantly remaining indifferent and dispassionate under all circumstances, whether favourable or unfavourable; whose lotus-like twin holy feet are worshipped, revered and honoured by the Lord who is the chief amongst the Yogis (i.e. Lord Shiva) and others as well, who is eternal, perpetual, permanent, immutable and everlasting, who is pristine pure, absolutely uncorrupt, without any shortcomings, blemishes or faults, who is most wise, realised, knowledgeable, erudite, sagacious and enlightened, who is without an end and conclusion, and who is like a wild fire for the multitudes of demons (representing evil and vile forces in this world)—I bow most reverentially and humbly pray to such a valiant and valorous Lord known as Sri Ram who represents the divine, ethereal cosmic sound called ‘OM’!¹ (13).

[¹OM is the divine Mantra consisting of the three syllables or letters, A, U and M. These three letters incorporate in themselves the entire gamut of creation right from its beginning, through its development, till its conclusion. The fact that Lord Ram is an embodiment of OM, i.e. he is the cosmic Lord of creation and prevails in all the phases of creation, is elaborately dealt with in the Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto nos. 2-3. In short, whatever that exists in this creation, from its beginning through its development and growth, till its final conclusion is nothing else but a manifestation of the Lord in varying levels of subtlety.]

त्वं मे नाथो नाथितकार्याखिलकारी मानातीतो माधवरूपोऽखिलधारी।
भक्त्या गम्यो भावितरूपो भवहारी योगाभ्यासैर्भावितचेतःसहचारी ।१४॥

tvam me nātho nāthitakāryākṣhīlakārī
mānātīto mādharūpo'khiladhārī /
bhaktyā gamyo bhāvitarūpo bhavahārī
yogābhyāsairbhāvitacetahsahacārī // 14 //

14. You are my Lord; you are the one who completes and implements all the proposals and prayers made by me (i.e. I propose but you are the one who puts them into practice; or in other words, the success of all my endeavours are dependent upon you). You are beyond any established standards or benchmarks, any dimensions and measurements, any generalities and scales that are usually applicable to all other entities in this world. You are a personification of Madhav (another name of Narayan, Vishnu, the sustainer of creation and the consort of goddess Laxmi). You are the bearer, sustainer and nourisher of the whole world. You are attainable or accessible only by firm faith, sincerity, devotion, dedication, belief and conviction. You can remove the fears arising out of this mundane, entrapping, deluding and artificial world by remembering your form which is divine, ethereal, sublime, subtle and eclectic but esoteric and mysterious. You reside in, literally move about and remain ensconced in, the mind-intellect complex which has been purified by the practice of Yoga (meditation and contemplation) (14).

त्वामाद्यन्तं लोकततीनां परमीशं लोकानां नो लौकिकमानैरधिगम्यम्।

भक्तिश्रद्धाभावसमेतैर्भजनीयं वन्दे रामं सुन्दरमिन्दीवरनीलम् । १५ ॥

tvāmādyantaṃ lokatatināṃ paramīśaṃ
lokānāṃ no laukikamānairadhigamyam /
bhaktiśraddhābhāvasametairbhajaniyaṃ
vande rāmaṃ sundaramindīvaranīlam // 15 //

15. You are the beginning and an end of this traditional world; you are the supreme Lord of all the worlds. You cannot be understood, measured, comprehended, proved, derived at or deduced by any standard, yardstick, measurement, scale, method or experiment known to this world. You are the Lord who is worthy to be adored, worshipped, honoured, revered and praised by those who have sincere devotion, dedication, faith, conviction, belief and reverence for you and have spiritually inclined emotions and outlooks—I bow humbly in reverence to Sri Ram who is as beautiful and enchanting as a blue-lotus (15).

को वा ज्ञातुं त्वामतिमानं गतमानं मायासक्तो माधव शक्तो मुनिमान्यम् ।
वृन्दारण्ये वन्दितवृन्दारकवृन्दं वन्दे रामं भवमुखवन्द्यं सुखकन्दम् । १६ ॥

ko vā jñātum tvāmatimānaṃ gatamānaṃ
māyāsakto mādharma śakto munimānyaṃ /
vṛndāraṇye vanditavṛndārakavṛndaṃ
vande rāmaṃ bhavamukhavandyaṃ sukhakandaṃ // 16 //

16. You are beyond the need of any visible proof or evidence to establish your existence, majesty, divinity and authority (i.e. no proof or evidence is required to establish your existence or authority). You are without any pride, ego, haughtiness, vanity, imposter and arrogance. Which creature, who is surrounded by, under the influence of and engrossed in Maya (i.e. shrouded by delusions arising out of ignorance and misconceptions about the actual reality about this materialistic world), is capable or proficient and adept enough to know who you really and truthfully are?

Oh Madhav (literally meaning the divine consort of Laxmi; another name of Vishnu)! You are the revered and venerable one for the great sages, seers and hermits. Though you had praised, honoured and adored all the Gods in Vrindavan (during your manifestation as Lord Krishna), you are yourself praised, honoured and adored by all of the Gods themselves as well as by Lord Shiva in the form of Sri Ram. I bow and pay my obeisance to Sri Ram who is a root (treasury, fount) of bliss, happiness, peace and tranquility (16).

नानाशास्त्रैर्वेदकदम्बैः प्रतिपाद्यं नित्यानन्दं निर्विषयज्ञानमनादिम् ।
मत्सेवार्थं मानुषभावं प्रतिपन्नं वन्दे रामं मरकतवर्णं मथुरेशम् । १७ ॥

nānāśāstrairvedakadambaiḥ pratipādyam

nityānandaṃ nirviṣaya-jñāna-mānādim /
matsevārthaṃ mānuṣabhāvaṃ pratipannaṃ
vande rāmaṃ marakatavarṇaṃ mathureśaṃ // 17 //

17. You are proved beyond doubt, confusion or uncertainties, and are the one who is being invoked, expounded upon and enunciated by the various scriptures along with by the Vedas (i.e. you are ascertained, proclaimed, demonstrated and established without any confusion by them) which unequivocally proclaim you as being eternal, immutable, truthful, unchanging and perpetual, as being an image of beatitude and felicity, as being without any alternatives and one of your only kind, as being an embodiment or an image of Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment, erudition, sagacity and realisation), and as being without a beginning and an end.

You have assumed a human form just in order to accomplish my pending work (that is, to protect the creation from the tyranny of cruel demons and other evil mongers). I bow in honour and reverence to Sri Ram who is blue-complexioned like the Markat Mani (blue sapphire), and are the Lord of Mathura (the city where Lord Krishna had slayed the demon Kansa) (17).'

[The reference to Lord Krishna as being the Lord of Mathura while praying to Sri Ram indicates that Brahma, the creator, sees no difference between Sri Ram and Sri Krishna, which indeed is the fact. Verse no. 16 has a similar reference.]

श्रद्धायुक्तो यः पठतीमं स्तवमाद्यं ब्राह्मं ब्रह्मज्ञानविधानं भुवि मर्त्यः।
रामं श्यामं कामितकामप्रदमीशं ध्यात्वा ध्याता पातकजालैर्विगतः स्यात् ॥१८॥

śraddhāyukto yaḥ paṭhatīmaṃ stavamādyam
brāhmaṃ brahmajñānavidhānaṃ bhuvi martyaḥ /
rāmaṃ śyāmaṃ kāmītakāmapradamīśaṃ
dhyātvā dhyātā pātakajālairvigataḥ syāt // 18 //

18. Those wise and thoughtful persons in this mortal world who would read and recite this prime and eternal Stotra (prayerful hymns)—which were first conceived and enunciated by Lord Brahma, the creator, and which are imbued and infused with the essential tenets pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahm—with full devotion, faith, conviction, respect and honour, are sure to be liberated/freed from all the shackles and entanglements representing the evil effects pertaining to their sins, misdeeds and misdemeanors of all kinds. Such recitation or reading should be done by invoking Sri Ram who is of a dark complexion and is the fulfiller of all the wishes and desires of his devotees. This Stotra proclaims and establishes the reality and essence about the supreme Brahm (18).

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(4.15) Lord Ram's Stotra by Indra (the King of Gods)

This hymn appears in the holy book 'Adhyatma Ramayan' written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan's Lanka Kand (Chapter 6), Canto (Sarga) 13, from verse nos. 24-32.

Indra, the king of Gods, also paid his obeisance to Lord Ram with the following hymn—

इन्द्र उवाच

भजेऽहं सदा राममिन्दीवराभं भवारण्यदावानलाभाभिधानम् ।
भवानीहृदा भावितानन्दरूपं भवाभावहेतुं भवादिप्रपन्नम् ॥२४॥

indra uvāca

bhaje'haṃ sadā rāmamindīvarābhaṃ
bhavāraṇyadāvānalābhābhīdhānam /
bhavānīhṛdā bhāvitānandarūpaṃ
bhavābhāvaHetuṃ bhavādīprapannam // 24 //

24. Indra (the King of Gods) said—'I always worship, honour and adore Sri Ram who looks most elegant, dignified, majestic and beautiful with a blue countenance like that of a blue-lotus, whose name is like a wild forest fire for the purpose of burning or destroying this materialistic, delusory, artificial and ensnaring mundane world which is like wild and dense forest (i.e. his holy and powerful name can burn the allurements and entrapments that this world presents to the soul diverting, it from its real goal of emancipation and salvation), whose blissful, most cheerful, enchanting and tranquil image/form is meditated upon by Bhavani in her heart (in other words, the blissful and pleasant image/form of Sri Ram resides in the heart of Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva), and who is the liberator from the fetters that shackle a creature to this world (consisting of a vicious, never ending cycle of birth and death; he is a medium by which one can free oneself from this world and its shackles). I bow reverentially before Sri Ram who is the refuge or shelter for Lord Shiva and other Gods (24).

सुरानीकदुःखौघनाशैकहेतुं नराकारदेहं निराकारमीड्यम् ।
परेशं परानन्दरूपं वरेण्यं हरिं राममीशं भजे भारनाशम् ॥२५॥

surānīkaduḥkhaughanāśaikahetuṃ narākāradehaṃ nirākāramīḍyam /
pareśaṃ parānandarūpaṃ vareṇyaṃ hariṃ rāmamīśaṃ bhaje
bhāranāśam // 25 //

25. He is the only medium by which all the miseries, distresses, sorrows and torments of the Gods etc. are destroyed or eliminated. He is presently in the form of a human,

though he is primarily without a form and is worthy of being praised and honoured through the medium of prayers. I worship, revere and adore that Lord Sri Ram who is the supreme Lord and the one who removes the burden of the earth, who is an image of supreme, eternal and immutable bliss, happiness, joy, peace and tranquility, who is worthy of being praised, honoured, revered and worshipped, and is Lord Hari (Vishnu) himself personified (25).

प्रपन्नाखिलानन्ददोहं प्रपन्नं प्रपन्नार्तिनिःशेषनाशाभिधानम् ।
तपोयोगयोगीशभावाभिभाव्यं कपीशादिमित्रं भजे राममित्रम् ॥२६॥

prapannākhilānandadohaṃ prapannaṃ
prapannārtiniḥśeṣanāśābhidhānam /
tapoyogayogīśabhāvābhāvyaṃ
kapīśādimitraṃ bhaje rāmamitraṃ // 26 //

26. He who is the shelter and provider of eternal happiness and succour of all kinds to those who seek refuge with him; he whose his name removes or destroys all types of miseries, sorrows, torments, tribulations, anguish and their likes of those humble devotees who have sought his shelter; who is the object of severe penances and austerities (Tapa), of deep meditation, concentration and contemplation (Yoga), and of thought and search by great and attained Yogis (ascetics); and who is a friend of the king of monkeys etc. (i.e. Sugriv and his ministers)—I adore, worship, honour and revere that Sri Ram who is a true and loyal friend personified (i.e. he is a sincere friend of all, or I worship him as my true and sincere friend because he has given me succour from the horrible torments that I was being subjected to by Ravana as a true and loyal friend) (26).

सदा भोगभाजां सुदूरे विभान्तं सदा योगभाजामदूरे विभान्तम् ।
चिदानन्दकन्दं सदा राघवेशं विदेहात्मजानन्दरूपं प्रपद्ये ॥२७॥

sadā bhogabhājāṃ sudūre vibhāntaṃ
sadā yogabhājāmadūre vibhāntam /
cidānandakandaṃ sadā rāghaveśaṃ
videhātmajānandarūpaṃ prapadye // 27 //

27. He keeps far away from people who are always indulgent and engrossed in pleasures of the sense organs and the objects of the materialistic world, while residing in the proximity and easy reach of those who are always firm in Yoga and self-restraint. He is an eternal and everlasting treasury or a root of eternal beatitude and felicity. He is an image and source of happiness, joy and delight for the daughter of Vaideha (i.e. Sita). I always worship, revere, honour and adore Sri Ram who has been born in the clan of king Raghu (27).

महायोगमायाविशेषानुयुक्तो विभासीश लीलानराकारवृत्तिः।
त्वदानन्दलीलाकथापूर्णकर्णाः सदानन्दरूपा भवन्तीह लोके॥२८॥

mahāyogamāyāviṣeśānuyukto vibhāsīśa līlānarākāravṛttiḥ /
tvadānandalīlā kathā pūrṇakarnāḥ sadānandarūpā bhavantiha loke
// 28 //

28. You appear like a human being (or are in the form of an ordinary man) out of your own wish and just for the sake of fun or playful activity. While assuming this form, you have also assumed the characteristics and attributes of a human that you seem to possess by virtue of your own great deluding powers called Maya. That is, you have joined hands with your Maya, and this company has created an illusion that you are a human being and have all the attributes of a human being.

Those people whose ears get constantly filled by hearing your divine stories which bestow them with happiness and joy as well as bliss and peace, are the ones who become images or stellar examples of constant, persistent and consistent contentedness, joy, bliss, peace, tranquility and happiness (28).

अहं मानपानाभिमत्तप्रमत्तो न वेदाखिलेशाभिमानाभिमानः।
इदानीं भवत्पादपङ्कजप्रसादात् त्रिलोकाधिपत्याभिमानो विनष्टः॥२९॥

aham mānapānābhimattapramatto na vedākhileśābhimānābhimānaḥ /
idāniṁ bhavātpādapadmaprasādāt trilokādhipatyābhimāno vinaṣṭaḥ
// 29 //

29. Oh Lord! I had become intoxicated, haughty, proud, boastful and arrogant due to honours, respect, stature and privileges that I had as the king of Gods as well as by indulgence in drinking Som (which is the elixir like drink offered to Gods during fire sacrifices). I cared for none due to my arrogance, pride and haughtiness of being all in all (or the Lord) of the entire world. Now, with the grace and kindness of your lotus-like divine and holy feet, my haughtiness, arrogance and vanity of being the master and Lord of the three worlds has been eliminated and destroyed. [The three worlds are— the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds.] (29).

स्फुरद्रत्नकेयूरहाराभिरामं धराभारभूतासुरानीकदावम् ।
शरच्चन्द्रवक्त्रं लसत्पद्मनेत्रं दुरावारपारं भजे राघवेशम्॥३०॥

sphuradratnakeyūrahārābhirāmaṁ dharābhārabhūtāsuranīkadāvam /
śaraccandravaktraṁ lasatpadmanetraṁ durāvārapāraṁ bhaje rāghaveśam
// 29 //

30. He who is adorned with glittering gem-studded arm bands and necklaces and looks most magnificent, handsome, elegant, enchanting and beautiful in them, who is

like a wild fire for the destructions of demons who are a burden for this earth, whose auspicious face and countenance resembles a full Moon of a winter night, and whose eyes are as beautiful, enchanting, enamouring and attractive as a beautiful lotus flower, and whose beginning or end is most difficult to ascertain—I adore, worship, honour and revere such a Raghav (Sri Ram) (30).

सुराधीशनीलाभ्रनीलाङ्गकान्तिं विराधादिरक्षोवधाल्लोकशान्तिम् ।
किरीटादिशोभं पुरातिलाभं भजे रामचन्द्रं रघूणामधीशम् ॥३१॥

surādhīśanīlābhranīlāṅgakāntiṃ virādhādirakṣovadhāllokaśāntim /
kiriṭādisobhaṃ purātīlābhaṃ bhaje rāmacandraṃ raghūṇāmadhīśam
// 31 //

31. He whose body has the ethereal radiance and divine glow resembling that of the ‘Indra Neel Mani’ (a blue sapphire worn by Lord of Gods, Indra, as a crown jewel) and is as dark as the (rain bearing) cloud, who had protected all the creatures by slaying the demon Viradh etc. to establish peace, tranquility and order in this world, who is adorned by a crown and a tiara etc., and who is the valuable asset and a valued treasure of Lord Shiva—I adore, worship, honour, praise and revere such a Sri Ramchandra who is the Lord of the clan of Raghu (31).

लसच्चन्द्रकोटिप्रकाशादिपीठे समासीनमङ्गे समाधाय सीताम् ।
स्फुरद्धेमवर्णा तडित्पुञ्जभासां भजे रामचन्द्रं निवृत्तार्तितन्द्रम् ॥३२॥

lasaccandrakoṭiprakāśādipīṭhe samāsīnamaṅke samādhāya sītām /
sphuraddhemavarṇāṃ taḍitpuñjabhāsaṃ bhaje rāmacandraṃ
nivṛttārtitandram // 32 //

32. He is sitting on a magnificent throne which is as glorious, splendourous, radiant and marvellous as millions of moons shining together with Sita by his side. She has a complexion as glowing and radiant as pure gold, and as splendourous, brilliant and dazzling as lightening. I adore, worship, honour, praise and revere such a Sri Ramchandra who is beyond the purview of any sorrows, anguish and distress as well as is without any sluggishness, inertia, indolence, lethargy, careless and apathetic attitude (i.e. he is most vigilant, alert, active and agile) (32).’

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(4.16) Lord Ram's Stotra by Lord Shiva

This hymn appears in the holy book 'Adhyatma Ramayan' written by sage Veda Vyas. It appears in Adhyatma Ramayan's Lanka Kand (Chapter 6), Canto (Sarga) 15, from verse nos. 51-63.

After Lord Ram returned to his capital city of Ayodhya and was crowned a king-emperor, Lord Shiva came finally to bow before the Lord who was dear to his heart. It was on this occasion that Lord Shiva offered his respects to Lord Ram with the following sacred hymn—

श्रीमहादेव उवाच
नमोऽस्तु रामाय सशक्तिकाय नीलोत्पलश्यामलकोमलाय ।
किरीटहाराङ्गदभूषणाय सिंहसनस्थाय महाप्रभाय ॥५१॥

śrīmahādeva uvāca
namo'stu rāmāya saśaktikāya nīlotpalaśyāmalakomalāya /
kirīṭahārāṅgadabhūṣaṇāya siṃhāsanaśthāya mahāprabhāya // 51 //

51. Lord Shiva said, 'I bow in honour of Sri Ram together with his 'Shakti' (literally, Lord's cosmic energy; but here referring to Sita). He is dark complexioned and tender like a blue lotus, is decorated with a crown, a tiara, a garland or necklace, arm band etc., is seated on a throne, and is full of divine and brilliant radiance (51).

त्वमादिमध्यान्तविहीन एकः सृजस्यवस्यत्सि च लोकजातम् ।
स्वमायया तेन न लिप्यसे त्वं यत्स्वे सुखेऽजसरतोऽनवद्यः ॥५२॥

tvamādimadhyāntavihīna ekaḥ sṛjasyavasyatsi ca lokajātam /
svamāyayā tena na lipyase tvam yatsve sukhe'jasrarato'navadyaḥ
// 52 //

52. Oh Lord! You are without a beginning, middle and an end, and are the only one of your kind. You create, sustain and annihilate the entire creation using your Maya (delusory power as well as the cosmic infinite creative energy), but are not involved in, attached to, affected or influenced by it because you are always established in a blissful, contented, happy and tranquil state of consciousness, and are absolutely faultless, without any blemishes and shortcomings, beyond reproach, and are uncorrupt and pristine pure (52).

लीलां विधत्से गुणसंवृतस्त्वं प्रपन्नभक्तानुविधानहेतोः ।

नानावतारैः सुरमानुषाद्यैः प्रतीयसे ज्ञानिभिरेव नित्यम् ॥५३॥

līlāṃ vidhatse guṇasaṃvṛtastvaṃ prapannabhaktānuvidhānahetoḥ /
nānāvātāraiḥ suramānuṣādyaiḥ pratiyase jñānibhireva nityam // 53 //

53. Surrounding (or investing/infusing) yourself willfully with the deluding characteristics of your Maya (i.e. you voluntarily allow yourself to be veiled in your Maya, you willingly invest yourself with its characteristics), you use it to carry out your wishes to take/assume various forms such as that of different Gods, humans and others. Then in those forms or incarnations, you do different types of deeds in order to show the righteous path of Dharma (i.e. path of righteousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, noble conduct etc.) to your devotees and followers who have taken shelter and refuge with you. At that time (i.e. during those incarnation or manifestation periods), only the wise and enlightened ones are able to recognise you (53).

[You reveal yourself in different forms and lead a stellar life of righteousness and auspiciousness amongst your devotees to show them in practical terms how to behave and live in the world in the scripture-sanctioned way and consequentially attain emancipation and salvation. These devotees or followers are those who have submitted themselves to you and look forward to you for protection, guidance, example and precedence, who treat you as their moral preceptor and guide, as their Lord whom to look up to for succour and solace, as well as for their emancipation and salvation or deliverance from this mundane and entrapping world. When you reveal yourself as an incarnation or as a manifestation, your devotees do not have to look anywhere else for their guidance and example, for your own life acts as a beacon for them. They might not be scholarly enough to benefit from the study of scriptures, but they sing your glories and see your example in their day to day lives and easily attain that rare stature that is available by hard study of scriptures and doing severe penances and keeping austerities. The path of Bhakti is easier to follow for ordinary creatures as compared to the arduous path of knowledge that has its own pitfalls.]

स्वांशेन लोकं सकलं विधाय तं विभर्षि च त्वं तदधः फणीश्वरः।

उपर्यधो भान्वनिलोडुपौषधिप्रवर्षरूपोऽवसि नैकधा जगत् ॥५४॥

svāṃśena lokaṃ sakalaṃ vidhāya taṃ bibharṣi ca tvaṃ tadadhaḥ
phaṇīśvaraḥ /
uparyadho bhānvaniloḍupauṣadhipravarṣarūpo'vasi naikadhā jagat // 54 //

54. You create the entire creation out of your own fraction and then take good care of it by bearing it or holding it aloft from below by becoming (assuming the form of) Sheshnath (the legendary, many-hooded serpent who holds the earth on its hood), and sustaining it from above by becoming the sun, the wind or air, the moon, the various herbs (medicinal products), and the rain. (54).

[Note—In other words, you not only create anything but also ensure that it is well taken care of. This is expected of a wise creator who is benevolent, munificent and magnanimous towards his creation. This verse implies that when one creates

anything, he should provide for its maintenance and sustenance. One should not leave his responsibilities to others.]

त्वमहि देहभृतां शिखिरूपः पचसि भुक्तमशेषमजस्रम्।
पवनपञ्चकरूपसहायो जगदखण्डमनेन बिभर्षि ॥५५॥

tvamiha dehabhṛtāṃ śikhirūpaḥ pacasi bhuktamaśeṣamajasraṃ /
pavanapañcakarūpasahāyo jagadakhandaṃmanena bibharṣi // 55 //

55. You assume the form of digestive powers of the creature, and with the help of the five vital airs (wind forces; see Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 28-34), you digest and assimilate the food taken in by the creatures, thereby sustaining and nourishing the whole world (55).

[The five vital wind forces that regulate life are the following:-- (1) Pran, the wind element, as breath, that is exhaled as well as inhaled, and which is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without life no other wind would be of any significance to the creature; (2) Apaana, the wind that passes down the intestines and is responsible for digestion of the food taken by the creature and its excretion through the anus and urinary organs (kidneys); (3) Saman, the wind that is responsible for equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body, as well as in circulation of blood; (4) Udaan, the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases in the body through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough; and (5) Vyan, the wind that helps in maintaining equilibrium in the body and control the functioning of the other winds.]

चन्द्रसूर्यशिखिमध्यगतं यत् तेज ईश चिदशेषतनूनाम्।
प्राभवत्तनुभृतामिव धैर्यं शौर्यमायुरखिलं तव सत्त्वम् ॥५६॥

candrasūryaśikhimadhyagataṃ yat teja īśa cidaśeṣatanūnām /
prābhavattanubhṛtāmiva dhairyaṃ śauryamāyurakhilaṃ tava sattvam
// 56 //

56. Oh Lord! The splendour, radiance, dazzle, brilliance, majesty, magnificence and the potential powers that the Moon, the Sun and the Fire possess, the pure, truthful and eternal Consciousness that is the characteristic feature of all living creatures, and the glorious virtues of tolerance, patience, fortitude and forbearance, of valour, bravery and courage, as well as the glory and fame that one acquires during a long life that seem evident in those who possess a gross physical body—all of them, all of these grand virtues and attributes, are nothing else but a vivid display of your majestic and stupendously versatile powers and potentials (56).

त्वं विरिञ्चिशिवविष्णुविभेदात् कालकर्मशशिसूर्यविभागात् ।
वादिनां पृथगिवेश विभासि ब्रह्म निश्चितमनन्यदिहैकम् ॥५७॥

tvaṃ viriñciśivaviṣṇuvibhedāt kālakarmaśaśisūryavibhāgāt /
vādināṃ prthagiveśa vibhāsi brahma niścitamanyadihaikam // 57 //

57. It is you who appears in different forms such as Brahma (the creator), Shiva (the annihilator) and Vishnu (the sustainer) etc. as well as Kaal (the God of death, time and circumstance), Karma (the theory of deeds and rewards), the Moon and the Sun (the celestial bodies) etc. depending upon the beliefs and faiths of followers of different schools of thought and philosophy. But there is no doubt in the fact that you are one and the same supreme Brahm reflected, as it were, in all those separate and distinct forms or entities in which people of different denominations worship and recognise you (57).

मत्स्यादिरूपेण यथा त्वमेकः श्रुतौ पुराणेषु च लोकसिद्धः।
तथैव सर्वं सदसद्विभागस्त्वमेव नान्यद्भवतो विभाति ॥५८॥

matsyādirūpeṇa yathā tvamekaḥ śrutau purāṇeṣu ca lokasiddhaḥ /
tathaiva sarvaṃ sadasadvibhāgastvameva nānyadbhavato vibhāti
// 58 //

58. Even as you are described by the Vedas, Purans, time honoured traditions and folklore as having existed in myriad forms such as the huge legendary fish etc. whatever true or false that appears in this world—in other words, all the twin appearances in which the world is divided or separated into, viz. those things or perceptions that appear to be true and those that appear to be false—is nothing else but only your manifestation or image; there is nothing separate, different or distinct from you (58).

यद्यत्समुत्पन्नमनन्तसृष्टावुत्पत्स्यते यच्च भवच्च यच्च।
न दृश्यते स्थावरजङ्गमादौ त्वया विनातः परतः परस्त्वम् ॥५९॥

yadyatsamutpannamanantasarṣṭāvutpatsyate yacca bhavacca yacca /
na dṛśyate sthāvarajaṅgamādaū tvayā vinātaḥ parataḥ parastvam // 59 //

59. Whatever that has been produced, shall be produced in future and is being produced (or happening) in the present in this vast, measureless and endless creation which consists of both the inanimate, immovable, inert and dead as well as the movable, active, alive and animate (i.e. dual) aspects of the artificial, delusory and deceptive mundane world, are all myriad images of you, and there is nothing that exists and is visible which is separate from you. Hence, you are beyond all comprehension, measures, yardsticks and definitions (59).

तत्त्वं न जानन्ति परात्मनस्ते जनाः समस्तास्तव माययातः।
त्वद्भक्तसेवामलमानसानां विभाति तत्त्वं परमेकमैशम् ॥६०॥

tattvaṃ na jānanti parātmanaste janāḥ samastāstava māyayātaḥ /
tvadbhaktasevāmalamānasānāṃ vibhāti tattvaṃ paramekamaiśam // 60 //

60. All people do not understand your essential and true nature or your fundamental form as the one who is ‘Parmatma’ (the transcendental, supreme, macrocosmic, all-pervading, omniscient Soul which is beyond definitions and attributes), because they are under the influence and spell of your deluding powers called Maya. Only those whose internal being (or their mind-intellect discriminating apparatus) have been purified due to the good influences of the services done by them toward your devotees and followers, are the ones who are able to perceive, experience or realise your true form, nature or essence as being the Parmatma (60).

ब्रह्मादयस्ते न विदुः स्वरूपं चिदात्मतत्त्वं बहिरर्थभावाः।
ततो बुधस्त्वामिदमेव रूपं भक्त्या भजन्मुक्तिमुपैत्यदुःखः ॥६१॥

brahmādayaste na viduḥ svarūpaṃ cidātmatattvaṃ bahirarthabhāvāḥ /
tato budhastvāmidameva rūpaṃ bhaktyā bhajanmuktimupaityaduḥkhaḥ
// 61 //

61. Those who regard the external, illusionary world of material comforts and artificial sense objects as being real or truthful do not know or realise your true and real form and essence as being the pure, eternal and truthful consciousness, even though they may be as exalted and superior as the creator Brahma himself¹. Hence, in order to avoid consternations, perplexities, confusions, dilemmas and doubts of all kinds, wise and sagacious persons worship you in this manifest and visible dark-complexioned form (as Sri Ram) with due and sincere devotion and dedication. As a result, they easily overcome sorrows, distresses, agonies and torments associated with this mundane, deluding and entangling world, and attain deliverance, emancipation and salvation (61).

[¹To wit, even Lord Brahma from whom the four Vedas have emerged, cannot know your true form if he is not realistic enough to realise or recognise the fact that the creation which he calls his own product is, in fact, not what he thinks it to be—that is, a creation created by him (Brahma). It is an illusion/deception created by you which Brahma takes erroneously to be for real, and as his own product, forgetting in the process that the powers to create that he possesses have been delegated to him by you. In fact, even Brahma the creator has been created by you. So if such exalted and attained souls can be under the magical and misleading spell of your delusions creating powers, then what can one say of lesser souls.]

अहं भवन्नाम गृणन्कृतार्थो वसामि काश्यामनिशं भवान्या ।
मुमूर्षमाणस्य विमुक्तयेऽहं दिशामि मन्त्रं तव राम नाम ॥६२॥

aham bhavannāma grṇankṛtārtho vasāmi kāśyāmaniśam bhavānyā /
mumūrṣamāṇasya vimuktaye'ham diśāmi mantraṁ tava rāma nāma // 62 //

62. Being extremely thankful and grateful, feeling highly contented and fulfilled by constantly chanting your name, I live in Kashi (Varanasi) day and night. There I pronounce your divine and holy name 'Ram' which is called the 'Tarak Mantra' for the benefit of all those who die there and wish to achieve emancipation and salvation, to help them in fulfilment of their wishes (62).

[The 'Tarak Mantra': The word 'Tarak' (pronounced as Taarak) means to 'take across'; so this Mantra (spiritual formula) grants liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the soul of the creature.

The Tarak Mantra of Lord Ram is elaborately described in Ramottartaponishad of the Atharva Veda tradition which is exclusively dedicated to Lord Ram, as well as in Tarak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition which is dedicated to the subject of emancipation and salvation.

The Tarak Mantra preached by Lord Shiva is that group of esoteric, ethereal and holy words, syllables or phrases that have stupendous magical and divine powers that can achieve miracles, and one of them is the ability to give liberation and deliverance to even sinful creatures who can never expect to find emancipation themselves. It gives freedom from miseries, fears, torments and other misfortunes that devour a creature. It liberates a creature from the cycle of birth and death, the miseries and fears associated with this world, with old age, death and their accompanying horrors etc. (Atharva-shikhar Upanishad, 2/1, 49; Advai-tarak Upanishad, 3; and Jabal Upanishad, canto 1. The ascetic/Yogi achieves liberation and deliverance by concentrating his internal thoughts at a point between the eyebrows where he realises the supreme, transcendental existence of Brahm, and he mentally one with Brahm after this realisation (Advai-tarak-2,3).

According to Ramottartaponishad, the divine emancipation and salvation providing Mantra is 'OM RANG RAMAYE NAMAHE' (Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, 2/3). Atharva-shikhar Upanishad, 44 says that 'OM' is that Tarak Mantra.]

इमं स्तवं नित्यमनन्यभक्त्या शृण्वन्ति गायन्ति लिखन्ति ये वै ।
ते सर्वसौख्यं परमं च लब्ध्वा भवत्पदं यान्तु भवत्प्रसादात् ॥६३॥

imam stavam nityamananyabhaktyā
śṛṇvanti gāyanti likhanti ye vai /
te sarvasaukhyam paramam ca labdhvā
bhavatpadam yāntu bhavatprasādāt // 63 //

63. (Now I pray to you that—) Those who regularly listen, recite, preach or write this Stotra (i.e. these prayerful verses or hymns) enunciated by me, with the greatest of devotion and sincerity, should, by your grace, be rewarded with complete blissfulness, happiness, peace, contentedness as well as with the privilege of attaining your supreme, holy, divine and august feet. That is, they should find oneness with you (63).'

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Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

Chapter 5

Ram Stavaraj, Ram Ashtaks & Ram Raksha Stotra

In this Chapter we shall read the following sacred Hymns of Lord Ram:--

- (5.1) Ram Stavaraj Stotra
- (5.2) Ram Ashtak Stotra
- (5.3) Raghunaath Ashtak Stotra
- (5.4) Sita Ram Ashtak Stotra
- (5.5) Ram Raksha Stotra

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(5.1) Ram Stavaraj Stotra

Ram Stavaraj Stotra by sage Narad (from Sanatkumar Sanghita):--

सनतकुमार संहिता का नारदोक्त
रामस्तवराजः

विनियोगः

ॐ अस्य श्रीरामचन्द्रस्तवराजस्तोत्रमन्त्रस्य सनत्कुमार—ऋषिः, श्रीरामो देवता, अनुष्टुप्छन्दः, सीता बीजम्, हनुमान् शक्तिः, श्रीरामप्रीत्यर्थे जपे विनियोगः ।

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] पाठकर्ता को चाहिए कि स्नान आदि नित्य कर्म से निवृत्त हो दहिने हाथ में जल लेकर 'ॐ अस्य श्रीरामस्तवराज स्तोत्र मन्त्रस्य०' से आरम्भ कर 'जपे विनियोगः' तक पढ़ कर जल को भूमि पर या किसी पात्र में छोड़े। इसके पश्चात् स्वस्थचित हो श्लोक नं० १ 'सर्वशास्त्रार्थतत्त्वज्ञं०' से आरम्भ कर श्लोक नं० ९८ 'जानकीकण्ठभूषणम्' पर्यन्त पाठ करे। ओम्!

भगवान् श्रीरामचन्द्रजी का यह स्तवराज नाम का अनुष्टुप छन्द स्तोत्र मंत्र स्वरूप है। यह सनत कुमार ऋषि की संहिता से लिया गया है। इसके पूज्य देवता श्रीराम हैं, सीता बीज स्वरूप हैं, हनुमान् शक्ति हैं और यह श्रीराम को प्रिय करने का साधन है।

sanatakumāra sanhitā kā nāradokta

rāmastavarājah

vinīyogah

asya śrīrāmacandrastavarājastotramantrasya sanatkumāra-ṛṣiḥ, śrīrāmo devatā, anuṣṭupchandaḥ, sītā bījam, hanumān śaktiḥ, śrīrāmaprītyarthe jape vinīyogah/

This is the introductory verse called ‘Vinīyog’ or invocation of the deity using Mantras. This prayer describes the glory of Sri Ram and finally asks the Lord to provide deliverance to the soul and free it from the worldly snare in which it finds itself trapped. ‘OM salutations— this is the Ramstavaraj Mantra culled from the ‘Sanatkumar Sanghita’ (a compendium of devotional hymns composed by the ancient sage Sanatkumar). Here, Lord Sri Ram is the patron God, the seed Mantra of Sita is used and the enforcing authority or the one who lends his strength and powers to help those who say this Stotra (devotional hymn) is none other than Hanuman himself. It is most dear to Sri Ram in the sense that it pleases him the most and he becomes extremely obliged and grateful to the person who recites this Stotra. This composition has verses in the poetic style called ‘Anushtup’ in which there are 4 ‘Charans’ [1 Charan = 1 step or stanza of a given verse], and each Charan has 8 letters. Therefore, the total no. of letters in each verse is 4x8 = 32 letters in all.

The devotee who recites this ‘Ramstavaraj’ Stotra should purify himself by bath and other routine chores. Then he should sit down calmly with water in his right hand. He should start the recitation of this Stotra by first reciting the words of this verse called ‘Vinīyog’. Then the water should be poured into some receptacle or left on the ground. Then the recitation should be done from the very first word of verse no. 1 and finished off at the last word of verse no. 98 without any interruption.

सूत उवाच

सर्वशास्त्रार्थतत्त्वज्ञं व्यासं सत्यवती—सुतम् । धर्मपुत्रः प्रहृष्टात्मा प्रत्युवाच मुनीश्वरम् ॥१॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] सूतजी ने कहा— ‘समस्त शास्त्रों के अर्थ एवं तत्त्वों के ज्ञाता, मुनियों में श्रेष्ठ सत्यवती के पुत्र व्यासजी से धर्मपुत्र युधिष्ठिर ने प्रसन्न होकर कहा— (१)।

sūta uvāca

sarvaśāstrārthatattvajñam vyāsam satyavatī-sutam/

dharmaputraḥ prahr̥ṣṭātmā pratyuvāca munīśvaram//1//

Sage Sut said, 'Yudhisthir, the son of Dharma, said cheerfully to sage Veda Vyas, the son of Satyawati, who was well versed in the meaning and truthful essence of all the scriptures, was very enlightened, erudite and scholarly as well as the most exalted amongst the sages (1).

युधिष्ठिर उवाच

भगवन्! योगिनां श्रेष्ठ! सर्वशास्त्रविशारद! । किं तत्त्वं किं परं जाप्यं किं ध्यानं मुक्तिसाधनम्
॥२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] 'हे व्यासजी! आप समस्त शास्त्रों के मर्मज्ञ एवं योगियों में श्रेष्ठ हैं। वास्तविक तत्त्व एवं सर्वश्रेष्ठ जप करने का मंत्र कौन सा है तथा किस प्रकार ध्यान किया जात है और मुक्ति का साधन क्या है? (२)।

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

bhagavan! caḍiyātuṁ yoginām! sarvaśāstraviśārada! /
kiṁ tattvaṁ kiṁ paraṁ jāpyaṁ kiṁ dhyānaṁ muktisādhanaṁ//2//

Yudhisthir said to Veda Vyas, 'Oh Lord! You are the most exalted amongst Yogis (ascetics) and a scholar par-excellence of all the scriptures. What is the essential, irrefutable truth and absolute reality; which is the best and most excellent Mantra to do Japa with; what is the method to do mediation and to concentrate upon the supreme Brahm and upon the pure-self; and what is the path to liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation in this world? (2).

वेदव्यास उवाच

श्रोतुमिच्छामि तत्सर्वं ब्रूहि मे मुनिसत्तम! धर्मराज महाभाग! शृणु वक्ष्यामि तत्त्वतः ॥३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप कृपा कर इन प्रश्नों का उत्तर दें'। वेदव्यासजी ने कहा— 'हे धर्मराज! मैं आपके प्रश्नों का उत्तर देता हूँ, उसे आप सावधानीपूर्वक सुने (३)।

vedavyāsa uvāca

śrotumicchāmi tatsarvaṁ brūhi me munisattama! mahābhāga dharmarāja!
śrṇu vakṣyāmi tattvataḥ//3//

Please be kind enough to answer these questions'. Sage Veda Vyas replied, 'Oh Dharmraj! Oh the most fortunate and great one! I am answering your question; listen to it carefully (3).

यत्परं सद्गुणातीतं यज्ज्योतिरमलं शिवम् । तदेव परमं तत्त्वं कैवल्यं पदकारणम् ॥४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] जो सत्त्व, रज एवं तम इन तीन गुणों से परे, ज्योति—स्वरूप, निर्मल, कल्याणकारी परमतत्त्व है वही कैवल्यमुक्ति का कारण है (४)।

yatparam sadguṇātītaṁ yajjyotiramalaṁ śivam/
tadeva paramaṁ tattvaṁ kaivalyaṁ padakāraṇam//4//

That which is beyond the three characteristic qualities that mark all the creatures of creation—such as Sata, Raja and Tama; that which is an embodiment of divine light and enlightenment, is pure and corruption free, is the all-welfare bestowing supreme entity which is the absolute truth and reality of this existence— such an entity is the only means to provide emancipation and salvation called ‘Kaivalaya Mukti’ (4).

श्रीरामेति परं जाप्यं तारकं ब्रह्मसंज्ञकम् । ब्रह्महत्यादि पापघ्नमिति वेदविदो विदुः ॥५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] श्रीराम का नामरूपी मंत्र ही सर्वश्रेष्ठ है। यह जप करने के लिए ब्रह्म संज्ञा वाला एवं प्राणी मात्र को भवसागर से पार लगाने वाला है। उक्त राम—नाम मंत्र ब्रह्महत्यादि महापापों को नाश करने वाला है— वेद वेत्ताओं ने ऐसा ही कहा है (५)।

śrīrāmeti paraṁ jāpyaṁ tāraṁ brahmasaṁjñakam/
brahmahatyādi pāpaghnamiti vedavidō viduḥ//5//

Sri Ram’s divine and holy name is the most potent, supreme and excellent Mantra amongst all the Mantras; it is equivalent to and synonymous with the supreme Brahm (the absolute and supreme entity). It has the potential to take the creature across the ocean represented by this mundane, delusionary and entrapping world. Those who are experts in the knowledge propounded by the Vedas positively assert that it has the power and strength to destroy (purge, purify, cleanse, annihilate and exhaust) the horrifying effects of great sins such as the killing of a Brahmin (5).

श्रीराम रामेति जना ये जपन्ति च सर्वदा । तेषां भुक्तिश्च मुक्तिश्च भविष्यति न संशयः ॥६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] जो साधक ‘श्रीराम मंत्र’ का जप निरन्तर करते हैं उन्हें निःसन्देह भोग एवं मोक्ष दोनों ही प्राप्त होते हैं (६)।

śrīrāma rāmeti janā ye japanti ca sarvadā/
teṣāṁ bhuktiśca muktiśca bhaviṣyati na saṁśayaḥ//6//

Those seekers/aspirants who repeat the holy name of Sri Ram constantly and consistently with due devotion and sincerity are sure to get both the benefits of

enjoyments of this materialistic world called 'Bhog' as well as the deliverance from it and emancipation and salvation of their souls called 'Mukti' (6).

स्तवराजं पुरा प्रोक्तं नारदेन च धीमता । तत्सर्वं सम्प्रवक्ष्यामि हरिर्ध्यानपुरःसरम् ॥७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] इस स्तवराज का वर्णन पहले भक्त प्रवर नारदजी ने किया है। उसे मैं भगवत चिन्तन कर पुनः वर्णन करता हूँ (७)।

stavarājāṁ purā proktaṁ nāradena ca dhīmatā/
tatsarvaṁ sampravakṣyāmi haridhyānapurāḥsaram//7//

The most erudite and foremost devotee of the Lord, sage Narad had enunciated these Stotras (hymns) called Stavaraj on some previous occasion. I shall repeat it verbatim for the purpose of remembering an honouring my Lord through them (7).

तापत्रयाऽग्निशमनं सर्वाधौध—निकृन्तनम् । दारिद्र्यदुःख—शमनं सर्वसम्पत्करं शिवम् ॥८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] यह राम स्तवराज आधिदैहिक, आधिदैविक एवं आधिभौतिक इन तीनों तापों को नष्ट करने वाला है। समस्त पाप समूहों का विनाशक, दारिद्र्य एवं दुःख को शान्त करने वाला तथा समस्त सम्पत्ति को प्रदान कर कल्याण करने वाला है। यह सत्य है (८)।

tāpatrayāgniśamanaṁ sarvāghaudha-nikṛntanam/
dāridrayaduḥkha-śamanaṁ sarvasampatkaraṁ śivam//8//

This 'Ram Stavaraj' is potent enough to destroy the disastrous effects caused by the 3 fires—'Adhi Daihik', 'Adhi Daivik' and 'Adhi Bhautik'. It is able to also destroy the treasury of all sins and their evil effects. It can calm down or eliminate the troubles and tribulations, miseries and distresses arising out of poverty and various other sorrows. It is the provider of all round well-being and auspiciousness. This is an Absolute Truth (8).

[(i) Adhi Daihik—torments that the creature suffers due to his body, such as old age and illness; (ii) Adhi Daivik—torments that the creature suffers due to the opposed Gods and malignant stars; (iii) Adhi Bhautik—torments that the creature suffers due to other terrestrial creatures such as enemies, thieves, competitors, kings etc. reptiles such as snakes, animals such as lions etc.]

विज्ञानफलदं दिव्यं मोक्षैकफलसाधनम् । नमस्कृत्य प्रवक्ष्यामि रामं कृष्णं जगन्मयम् ॥९॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] समस्त चराचर में व्याप्त भगवान् राम एवं कृष्ण को नमस्कार कर विज्ञान (तत्त्व ज्ञान) फल प्रदायक एवं मोक्ष का एक मात्र साधन इस राम स्तवराज का मैं निरूपण करता हूँ (९)।

vijñānaphaladaṁ divyaṁ mokṣaikaphalasāadhanam/
namaskṛtya pravakṣyāmi rāmaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ jaganmayam//9//

After bowing reverentially before Sri Ram and Krishna who pervade the entire animate as well as the inanimate world, I shall describe this ‘Ram Stavaraj Stotras’ which provides the fruit of true knowledge and enlightenment as well as is the only easy path to emancipation and salvation (Mukti) of the soul (9).

अयोध्यानगरे रम्ये रत्नमण्डपमध्यगे । स्मरेत् कल्पतरोर्मूले रत्नसिंहासनं शुभम् ॥१०॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] साधक स्मरण करे कि अयोध्या नगरी में रत्नजटित मण्डप है, उसमें कल्पवृक्ष के नीचे एक रत्नसिंहासन है (१०)।

ayodhyānagare ramye ratnamaṇḍapamadhyage/
smaret kalpatarormūle ratnasinhāsanam śubham//10//

The seeker/aspirant should visualise a gem-studded throne in Ayodhya. This throne is under the shadow of the ‘Kalpa Tree’ (the evergreen, wish fulfilling tree of Gods) in a gem-studded pavilion (10).

तन्मध्येऽष्टदलं पद्मं नानारत्नैश्च वेष्टितम् । स्मरेन्मध्ये दाशरथिं सहस्रादित्यतेजसम् ॥११॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] उस सिंहासन के मध्य अनेक रत्नों वाला एक अष्टदल कमल है और उस कमल के मध्य में हजारों सूर्य के समान तेज वाले दाशरथी श्रीराम का स्मरण करे (११)।

tanmadhyeṣṭadalaṁ padmaṁ nānāratnaīśca veṣṭitam/
smarenmadhye dāśarathim sahastrādityatejasam//11//

On that gleaming and magnificent throne, in the centre of it, the seeker should visualise that there is 8-petal lotus fully embellished with glittering gems. On it is seated the son of Dasrath, Sri Ram, who is splendorous and radiant as thousands of suns (11).

पितुरङ्गतं राममिन्द्रनील—मणिप्रभम् । कोमलाङ्गं विशालाक्षं विद्युद्वर्णाम्बरावृतम् ॥१२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] पिता की गोद में स्थित, इन्द्रनील मणि के समान आभा वाले, विशाल नेत्र तथा विद्युत के समान चमकीले वस्त्र उन्होंने धारण किये हुए हैं (१२)।

pituraṅkagataṁ rāmamindranīla-maṇiprabham/

komalāṅgaṁ viśālākṣaṁ vidyudvarṇāmbārāvṛtam//12//

He (Sri Ram) is seated on the lap of his father. He is dark complexioned like the Indra's gem called 'Indraneel Mani'. He has tender (soft, delicate) body and large eyes, and he is wearing clothes like the dazzle and glitter of lightening (12).

भानुकोटिप्रतीकाशं किरीटेन विराजितम् । रत्नग्रैवेयकेयूर-रत्नकुण्डल मण्डितम् ॥१३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] उसी प्रकार करोड़ों सूर्य के समान उनकी कान्ति है, उनके सर पर मुकुट शोभित है एवं गले में रत्नों का हार तथा कानों में कुण्डल शोभायमान है (१३)।

bhānukoṭīpratīkāśaṁ kirīṭena virājitaṁ/
ratnagraiveyakeyūra-ratnakunḍala maṇḍitaṁ//13//

He has a radiance which is equivalent to millions of suns. He is adorned by a magnificent crown, is wearing a gem-studded necklace as well as ear-rings which are also studded with gems (13).

रत्नकङ्कणमञ्जीर-कटिसूत्रैरलङ्कृतम् । श्रीवत्सकौस्तुभोरस्कं मुक्ताहारोपशोभितम् ॥१४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वे रत्ननिर्मित कंकण, पैरों में मंजीर, कमर में कर्धनी तथा मुक्ताहार सहित श्रीवत्स चिन्ह और कौस्तुभमणि से अलंकृत हैं (१४)।

ratnakaṅkaṇamañjīra-kaṭisūtrairalaṅkṛtaṁ/
śrīvatsakaustubhoraskaṁ muktāhāropaśobhitaṁ//14//

He is adorned with gem-studded bracelets, anklets and a waist-band. He wears a necklace of pearls, has the mark of 'Sri Vasta' and also wears the 'Kaustav jewel' on his chest (14).

[Note :- The Kaustav jewel is worn by Vishnu; Sri Vasta is the mark of sage Brighu's footprints on his chest.]

दिव्यरत्नसमायुक्तं मुद्रिकाभिरलङ्कृतम् । राघवं द्विभुजं बालं राममीषत्-स्मिताननम् ॥१५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] श्रीराम का बालस्वरूप सुन्दर रत्नों से निर्मित अंगूठी से सुशोभित है। उनकी मुस्कान सुमधुर और मन्द हास्ययुक्त है। वे दो भुजा वाले हैं (१५)।

divyaratnasamāyuktaṁ mudrikābhiraṅkṛtaṁ/
rāghavaṁ dvibhujam bālaṁ rāmamiṣat-smitānanaṁ//15//

Raghav's (Lord Ram's) child-like form is adorned by finger-rings made of beautiful gems. He has a pleasant, bewitching and sweet smile on his face. He has 2 arms (15).

[Lord Vishnu is depicted by legend as having 4 arms. His incarnation Sri Ram has only 2 arms because Vishnu assumed the form of a human being. A man has 2 arms and not 4.]

तुलसी—कुन्द—मन्दार—पुष्पमाल्यैरलङ्कृतम् । कर्पूराङ्गुरु—कस्तूरी—दिव्यगन्धानुलेपनम् ॥१६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वे तुलसी, गेंदा, मन्दार आदि पुष्प मालाओं से विभूषित हैं। कपूर, अगर एवं कस्तूरी आदि सुगन्धित पदार्थों का लेप किये हुए हैं (१६)।

tulasī-kunda-mandāra-puṣpamālyairalaṅkṛtam/
karpūrā'guru-kastūrī-divyagandhānulepanam//16//

He is adorned by garlands made up of Tulsi (basil), Marigold, Swallow-Wort and similar flowers. His body is smeared by (or rubbed by) a scented paste consisting of camphor, aloe-wood and powdered musk which emanates a pleasant fragrance (16).

योगशास्त्रेष्वभिरतं योगीशं योगदायकम् । सदा भरत—सौमित्रि—शत्रुघ्नैरुपशोभितम् ॥१७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वे योगशास्त्र में रत हैं, योगियों के स्वामी हैं एवं योग प्रदायक हैं। भरत, लक्ष्मण और शत्रुघ्न के द्वारा सुशोभित हैं (१७)।

yogaśāstreṣvabhiratam yogīśam yogadāyakam/
sadā bharata-saumitri-śatrughnairupaśobhitam//17//

He is involved in the study and practice of the science of Yoga (meditation), is the Lord of Yogis (ascetics) and he is able to bestow the knowledge and benefits of Yoga to others (i.e. he is well-versed in the knowledge of the science of Yoga and is able to teach others about it). He is attended by (literally, adorned by) Bharat, Laxman and Shatrughan (17).

विद्याधर—सुराधीश—सिद्धगन्धर्व—किन्नरैः । योगीन्द्रैर्नारदाद्यैश्च स्तूयमानमहर्निशम् ॥१८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वे विद्याधर, इन्द्र, सिद्ध, गन्धर्व, किन्नर तथा योगियों में श्रेष्ठ नारद आदि ऋषियों के द्वारा सदा स्तुत्य हैं (१८)।

vidyādhara-surādhiśa-siddhagandharva-kinnaraiḥ/
yogīndraināradādyaiśca stūyamānamaharniśam//18//

He is always praised, honoured and adored by Vidyadhar (a category of demi-Gods who are more exalted than Gandharvas and Kinnars but are not full-fledged Gods), Indra, Siddhas (mystics; the attained ones), Gandharvas (demi-Gods; celestial

musicians), Kinnars (celestial dancers and singers; legendary demi-Gods with the head of horse) as well as by Narad and other exalted sages and seers (18).

विश्वामित्र—वसिष्ठादि—मुनिभिःपरिसेवितम् । सनकादि—मुनिश्रेष्ठैर्योगिवृन्दैश्च सेवितम् ॥१९॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वे विश्वामित्र, वसिष्ठ आदि मुनिश्रेष्ठों, सनकादि एवं योगियों द्वारा भी सुसेवित हैं (१९)।

viśvāmitra-vasiṣṭhādi-munibhiḥparisevitam/
sanakādi-muniśreṣṭhairyogivr̥ndaiśca sevitaṃ//19//

He is being served by the exalted sages and seers such as Vishwamitra, Vashistha etc., as well as by Yogis and celestial sages such as Sankadi etc. (19).

रामं रघुवरं वीरं धनुर्वेद—विशारदम् । मङ्गलयतनं देवं रामं राजीवलोचनम् ॥२०॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] रघुश्रेष्ठ श्रीराम वीर, धनुर्वेद विशारद, मंगलरूप एवं कमलनेत्र हैं (२०)।

rāmaṃ raghuvaraṃ vīraṃ dhanurveda-viśāradam/
maṅgālayatanaṃ devaṃ rāmaṃ rājīvalocanam//20//

Sri Ram is the best and the most exalted in the clan of Raghu. He is brave, valiant and courageous. He is an expert archer and proficient in the use of the bow. He is an image/embodiment of auspiciousness and has lotus-like eyes (20).

सर्वशास्त्रार्थ—तत्त्वज्ञमानन्दकर—सुन्दरम् । कौसल्यानन्दनं रामं धनुर्बाणधरं हरिम् ॥२१॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वे समस्त शास्त्रों के अर्थ एवं तत्त्व को जानने वाले, सुन्दर स्वरूप, आनन्द प्रदायक, कौसल्या माता को आनन्दित करने वाले एवं धनुष—बाणधारी हैं (२१)।

sarvaśāstrārtha-tattvajñamānandakara-sundaram/
kausalyānandanam rāmaṃ dhanurbāṇadharaṃ harim//21//

He knows the essential and sublime truth as expounded by all the scriptures, and has a deep insight into their true meaning. He also knows all of them by heart. He is charming and beautiful to look at and is the bestower of bliss, happiness and joy. He provides delight to Kaushalya (his mother), and he is famous as the one who holds a bow and an arrow (21).

एवं सञ्चिन्तयन् विष्णुं यज्ज्योतिरमलं विभुम् । प्रहृष्टमानसो भूत्वा मुनिवर्यः स नारदः ॥२२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] इस प्रकार पूर्वोक्त विशेषणों से विशिष्ट, निर्मल और सर्वव्यापक, ज्योतिस्वरूप विष्णु का स्मरण करने से नारदजी प्रसन्न हो गये (२२)।

evaṁ sañcintayan viṣṇuṁ yajjyōtirmalaṁ vibhum /
prahr̥ṣṭamānasō bhūtvā munivaryaḥ sa nāradaḥ // 22 //

Having all the aforesaid qualities and virtues, Sri Ram is pure, uncorrupt, all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing besides being an embodiment of supreme and divine light. [‘Light’ here represents divinity, enlightenment, wisdom and erudition, truth and absolute reality.]

Sage Narad felt very cheerful and exhilarated on remembering Lord Vishnu in this form and endowed with these qualities (22).

सर्वलोक—हितार्थाय तुष्टाव रघुनन्दनम् । कृताञ्जलिपुटो भूत्वा चिन्तयन्नद्भुतं हरिम् ॥२३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] उन्होंने (नारद ने) समस्त विश्व के कल्याण के लिए हाथ जोड़कर आनन्दवर्धक रामचन्द्र का स्मरण करते हुए उनकी स्तुति की (२३)।

sarvaloka-hitārthāya tuṣṭāva raghunandanam/
kṛtāñjalipuṭo bhūtvā cintayannadvhutaṁ harim//23//

Narad folded his hands in reverence and prayed to Sri Ram who enhances the bliss, joy and happiness of the world. He prayed for the welfare and auspiciousness of the entire world (23).

यदेकं यत्परं नित्यं तदनन्तं चिदात्मकम् । यदेकं व्यापकं लोके तद्रूपं चिन्तयाम्यहम् ॥२४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ‘जो भगवान् श्रीराम का रूप अद्वितीय, सर्वव्यापक, सर्वश्रेष्ठ, नित्य, अनन्त तथा ज्ञानरूप है— उस रूप का मैं चिन्तन करता हूँ (२४)।

yadekaṁ yatparaṁ nityaṁ tadanantaṁ cidātmakam/
yadekaṁ vyāpakam loke tadrūpaṁ cintayāmyaham//24//

Narad prayed, 'I remember that form of Sri Ram which is unique, unparalleled and without a second, is all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing, is the best and most exalted, is eternal, absolute and truthful, is an embodiment/image of Gyan (wisdom, enlightenment, truthful knowledge, erudition and awareness) (24).

विज्ञानहेतुं विमलायताक्षं प्रज्ञानरूपं स्वसुखैकहेतुम् ।
श्रीरामचन्द्रं हरिमादिदेवं परात्परं राममहं भजामि ॥२५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] मैं उन श्रीराम को भजता हूँ जो विज्ञान (ज्ञान) के कारण, स्वच्छ एवं दीर्घ नेत्रों से युक्त, ज्ञान स्वरूप, आत्मानन्द के कारण आदि देव तथा श्रेष्ठतम हैं'(२५)।

vijñānahetum vimalāyatākṣaṁ prajñānarūpaṁ svasukhaikahetum/
śrīrāmacandraṁ harimādidevaṁ parātparam rāmamahaṁ bhajāmi//25//

I worship that Sri Ram who is the cause or the essence of all sciences (or truthful knowledge about the ultimate reality; the word 'science' refers to metaphysics), is pure and blessed with foresight and insight, is an embodiment of (or personification) of Gyan, is the cause of supreme bliss of self-realisation, is the most ancient Lord (or is the first amongst all the Gods) and is the most exalted and most superior amongst them all' (25).

कविं पुराणं पुरुषं पुरस्तात् सनातनं योगिनमीशितारम् ।
अणोरणीयां समनन्तवीर्यं प्राणेश्वरं राममसौ ददर्श ॥२६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] इस प्रकार स्तुति करके नारदजी ने श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को देखा जो ऊँचे कवि, पुराण पुरुष आदिभूत, सनातन, ऐश्वर्यशाली, छोटे से छोटे, अमित बलशाली तथा प्राणों के भी ईश्वर हैं (२६)।

kaviṁ purāṇaṁ puruṣaṁ purastāt sanātanaṁ yoginamīśitāram/
aṇoraṇīyāṁ samanantavīryaṁ prāṇeśvaraṁ rāmamasau dadarśa//26//

When sage Narad had prayed as above, he had a divine vision of Sri Ram who is an honoured poet (i.e. a well-lettered and a learned being), the 'Puran Purush' (ancient hero or the Lord who has been lauded by the Purans), is the primordial essential elements (i.e. Sri Ram represents the 5 basic elements earth, water, fire, air and space from which the whole creation has evolved), is eternal, infinite, absolute and truthful, is majestic, stupendous, magnificent, glorious and famed, is microcosmic (as well as macrocosmic) in form, is of an immeasurable strength, force, prowess, potent and valour, and is the Lord of the creature's soul (26).

नारद उवाच

नारायणं जगन्नाथमभिरामं जगत्पतिम् । कविं पुराणं वागीशं रामं दशरथात्मजम् ॥२७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] नारदजी ने कहा— 'नारायण, जगन्नाथ, आनन्दवर्धक, जगत्पति, कवि, पुराणस्वरूप, योगीश, दशरथपुत्र श्रीराम को मेरा प्रणाम है (२७)।

nārada uvāca

nārāyaṇaṁ jagannāthamabhirāmaṁ jagatpatim/ kaviṁ purāṇaṁ vāgīśaṁ
rāmaṁ daśarathātmajam//27//

Narad said, 'Oh Narayan (Vishnu), Lord of the world, the enhancer of happiness, joy, delight and bliss of all, the master of the world, the expert poet (i.e. one who is expert in literature and is a prodigious man of letters), the embodiment/personification/image of Purans (i.e. the one who represents all the virtues glorified by the ancient historical treatises called Purans), the Lord of those who are the most exalted amongst Yogis (ascetics), and the son of Dasrath—I bow and pay my obeisance most reverentially before such a Sri Ram (27).

राजराजं रघुवरं कौसल्यानन्दवर्धनम् । भर्गं वरेण्यं विश्वेशं रघुनाथं जगद्गुरुम् ॥२८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] राजा राम, रघुश्रेष्ठ, कौसल्या के आनन्दवर्धक, पापनाशक, अत्यन्त तेजस्वी, सर्वश्रेष्ठ, जगत के गुरु, भगवान् राम को मेरा प्रणाम है (२८)।

rājarājaṁ raghuvaraṁ kausalyānandavardhanam/
bhargaṁ vareṇyaṁ viśveśaṁ raghunāthaṁ jagadgurum//28//

Oh King of kings, Lord Sri Ram, the most exalted member in the family descended from King Raghu (of Ayodhya), the enhancer of the joys of mother Kaushalya, the crusher and destroyer of sins, evils and misdemeanours of all kinds, the most splendid and glorious one, the most excellent and exalted one, and the teacher/moral preceptor/guide for the entire world—I bow before you most humbly and reverentially (28).

सत्यं सत्यप्रियं श्रेष्ठं जानकीवल्लभं विभुम् । सौमित्रिपूर्वजं शान्तं कामदं कमलेक्षणम् ॥२९॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] सत्यस्वरूप, सत्यप्रिय, श्रेष्ठ, जानकीवल्लभ, सर्वव्यापक, लक्ष्मण के अग्रज, शान्त, कामनाओं को पूर्ण करने वाले एवं कमलनेत्र श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (२९)।

satyaṁ satyapriyaṁ śreṣṭhaṁ jānakīvallabhaṁ vibhum/
saumitripūrvajaṁ śāntaṁ kāmadaṁ kamalekṣaṇam//29//

You are an embodiment/image/personification of truthfulness; you are the lover of truth and honesty; you are the most excellent and exalted being; you are the beloved of Janki (Sita); you are all-pervading, all-incorporating and all-encompassing; you are the elder brother of Laxman; you are tranquil, serene, calm and peaceful by temperament; you are the fulfiller of all the desires and wishes of the creature; you are lotus-eyed—I bow before Sri Ram most reverentially (29).

आदित्यं रविमीशानं घृणिं सूर्यमनामयम् । आनन्दरूपिणं सौम्यं राघवं करुणामयम् ॥३०॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आदित्य, रवि, ईशान, घृणि, सूर्य, अनामय, आनन्दस्वरूप, सौम्य और करुणास्वरूप श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (३०)।

ādityaṁ ravimīśānaṁ ghr̥ṇīm sūryamaṇāmayaṁ/
ānandarūpiṇaṁ saumyaṁ rāghavaṁ karuṇāmayaṁ//30//

You are ‘Aditya’ (the sons of Aditi— the Gods, the sun, Indra, Vaaman the dwarf incarnation of Vishnu, the 8 Vasus), ‘Ravi’ (the sun, the fire, the leader), ‘Ishan’ (Lord Shiva), ‘Grhini’ (adorable), ‘Surya’ (the sun-God), ‘Anamaya’ (healthy, without any faults or blemishes, without any reproach), an embodiment/image of bliss, joy and happiness, sober and modest as well as merciful, kind and compassionate—I bow before such a Sri Ram most humbly and reverentially (30).

यामदग्निं तपोमूर्तिं रामं परशुधारिणम् । वाक्पतिं वरदं वाच्यं श्रीपतिं पक्षिवाहनम् ॥३१॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] परशुधारी, तप की मूर्ति, जमदग्नि के पुत्र, वाणी के पति, वरदायक, गरुड़ वाहन, लक्ष्मीपति श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (३१)।

yāmadagniṁ tapomūrtiṁ rāmaṁ paraśudhāriṇaṁ/
vākpatiṁ varadaṁ vācyaṁ śrīpatiṁ pakṣivāhanaṁ//31//

(For all practical purpose, for me—) You are the son of sage Jamdagni (i.e. Parashuram), and as such you hold an axe; you are an image of Tapa (austerities and penances); you are the Lord of speech; you are a giver of boons; you are the rider of the legendary bird Garud (the mount of Lord Vishnu; eagle/heron); you are the Lord of Laxmi—I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially and devotionally (31).

श्रीशार्ङ्गधारिणं रामं चिन्मयानन्दविग्रहम् । हलधृग्—विष्णुमीशानं बलरामं कृपानिधिम् ॥३२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] शार्ङ्ग धनुषधारी, सच्चिदानन्द स्वरूप, हलधारी, विष्णु, ईशान तथा कृपानिधि, रूपधारी बलराम श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (३२)।

śrīśārngadhāriṇaṁ rāmaṁ cinmayānandavigrahaṁ/
haladhrg-viṣṇumīśānaṁ balarāmaṁ kṛpānidhim//32//

You hold a bow called ‘Sharang’ (a bow held by Lord Vishnu); you are an image of eternal, supreme and truthful bliss; you hold a plough i.e. you are Balram, the elder brother of Lord Krishna; you are Vishnu and Ishan (Shiva); you are a personification of mercy, kindness and compassion—I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially and with utmost humility (32).

श्रीवल्लभं कृपानाथं जगन्मोहनमच्युतम् । मत्स्य—कूर्म—वाराहादि—रूपधारिणमव्ययम् ॥३३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] लक्ष्मी के प्रिय, कृपा के स्वामी, संसार को मोहित करने वाले, अच्युत तथा मत्स्य, कूर्म, वाराहादि रूप को धारण करने वाले, अविनाशी श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (३३)।

śrīvallabhaṁ kṛpānāthaṁ jaganmohanamacyutam/
matsya-kūrma-vārāhādi-rūpadhāriṇamavyayam//33//

You are the beloved of Laxmi, are the Lord of compassion and are the one who keeps the world enthralled, are imperishable and indestructible and have assumed various forms such as the legendary fish, the tortoise and the boar etc.—I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially and devotionally (33).

वासुदेवं जगद्योनिमनादिनिधनं हरिम् । गोविन्दं गोपतिं विष्णुं गोपीजनमनोहरम् ॥३४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वासुदेव के पुत्र, संसार के जन्मदायक, आदिअन्त से रहित, गायों के स्वामी, गोपियों के मन को हरन करने वाले तथा विष्णु एवं गोविन्द नाम से जानने वाले श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (३४)।

vāsudevaṁ jagadyonimanādinidhanaṁ harim/
govindaṁ gopatiṁ viṣṇuṁ gopījanamanoharam//34//

You are also called the son of Vasudeo (Krishna), are the creator of the world, are without a beginning or an end, are the Lord of the cows as well as the one who has enchanted the heart of the cowherd maids (of Vrindavan). Your name is Govind as well as Vishnu—I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially and with humility (34).

[By calling Lord Sri Ram as 'Krishna', the composer of these hymns tries to establish that there is no difference between Lord Sri Ram and Lord Krishna.]

गो—गोपालपरीवारं गोपकन्या—समावृतम् । विद्युत्पुञ्जप्रतीकाशं रामं कृष्णं जगन्मयम् ॥३५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ग्वालबालों से घिरे हुए, विद्युत समूह के समान कान्ति वाले, जगन्मय श्रीकृष्ण स्वरूप भगवान् श्रीराम को मेरा प्रणाम है (३५)।

go-gopālaparivāraṁ gopakanyā-samāvṛtam/
vidyutpuñjapratikāśaṁ rāmaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ jaganmayam//35//

Surrounded by cowherd boys and milkmaid girls in your manifestation as Lord Krishna, your radiance is like the dazzle of electric. You pervade in the whole world (i.e. you are omnipresent). I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially (35).

गो—गोपिका—समाकीर्ण वेणुवादन—तत्परम् । कामरूपं कलावन्तं कामिनी—कामदं विभुम् ॥३६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ओ विभो! आप गौ और गोपियों से घिरे हुए, वंशी बजाने में प्रवीण, कामदेव के समान स्वरूप वाले, कामिनियों की इच्छा पूर्ण करने वाले हैं (३६)।

go-gopikā-samākīrṇaṁ veṇuvādana-tatparam/
kāmarūpaṁ kalāvantaṁ kāmīnī-kāmadam vibhum//36//

Oh Vibho (omnipotent, almighty, omnipresent Lord; an epithet for Lord Vishnu)! Being surrounded by cowherd boys and girls (during your manifestation as Lord Krishna), you play the flute expertly. You are as beautiful and enchanting as Kamdeo-cupid. You fulfill the desires of charming women¹. (36).

[¹It is believed that all the women-folk of Janakpur, the birthplace of Sita who was the consort of Lord Ram, of Ayodhya, the capital city of the Lord himself, and the countless other women-folk of the villages through which Lord Ram had passed on his way to the forest exile, and of the many other lands where he visited during his lifetime, were so charmed by the Lord's bewitching beauty and attractiveness, by his excellent manners and noble bearing that he endeared himself to all of them, and they wished that some day they would have a chance to be close to the Lord and enjoy his company. To fulfill their desires, when Lord Ram came down to the world in his next incarnation as Lord Krishna, all these women became ladies during his time and enjoyed uninhibited access to the Lord. Some became young milkmaid girls of Vrindavan who played with Krishna during his childhood days as close friends of his; some became elder ladies who would show their love and affection for the Lord by pampering Krishna with a lot of motherly love as if he were their own son.]

मन्मथं मथुरानाथं माधवं मकरध्वजम् । श्रीधरं श्रीकरं श्रीशं श्रीनिवासं परात्परम् ॥३७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] मन्मथ (कामदेव) स्वरूप, मथुराधिपति, माधव, मकरध्वज, श्रीधर, श्रीकर, श्रीश तथा श्रीनिवास, परात्पर भगवान् श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (३७)।

manmatham mathurānātham mādham makaradhvajam/
śrīdharam śrīkaram śrīśam śrīnivāsam parātparam//37//

You are the personification of 'Manmath' (Kamdeo-cupid) and are the Lord of Mathura (i.e. Lord Krishna). You are known by the names of Madhav, Makardwaj, Sridhar, Srikar, Srisha and Srinivas (which are the various names of Lord Vishnu). You are the supreme and most exalted Lord—I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially¹. (37).

[¹It ought to be noted here that this prayer is dedicated to Lord Ram, and therefore it is he who is being honoured in the form of Krishna. Remember: Both Lord Ram and Lord Krishna were manifestations of the same Supreme Being called Vishnu or the Viraat Purush. Lord Vishnu revealed himself at different times and ages, assuming different names and forms in these manifestations.]

भूतेशं भूपतिं भद्रं विभूतिं भूतिभूषणम् । सर्वदुःखहरं वीरं दुष्टदानववैरिणम् ॥३८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] भूतेश, पृथ्वीपति, भद्र, विभूति तथा भूतिभूषण, सब दुःख विनाशक, दुष्ट राक्षसों के संहारक श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (३८)।

bhūteśaṁ bhūpatiṁ bhadraṁ vibhūtiṁ bhūtibhūṣaṇam/
sarvaduḥkhaharaṁ vīraṁ duṣṭadānavavairiṇam//38//

You are the Lord of the five basic elements (earth, water, fire, wind and space which are the building blocks of creation), are the Lord of the earth, are a noble gentleman, are majestic, glorious, magnificent, stupendous and almighty, are the adornment of the world (i.e. your noble virtues are like an ornament which adorns the world), are the destroyer of all sorrows, distresses, miseries, troubles and tribulations, and are the slayer of demons (representing evil forces in the world)—I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially and devotionally (38).

श्रीनृसिंहं महाबाहुं महान्तं दीप्ततेजसम् । चिदानन्दमयं नित्यं प्रणवं ज्योतिरूपिणम् ॥३९॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] नृसिंह रूपधारी, दीर्घबाहु, सर्वश्रेष्ठ, परमतेजस्वी, ज्ञान और आनन्द की मूर्ति, नित्य एवं आकाररूप श्रीराम को प्रणाम है (३९)।

śrīnṛsinhaṁ mahābāhuṁ mahāntaṁ dīptatejasam/
cidānandamayam nityaṁ praṇavaṁ jyotirūpiṇam//39//

You had assumed the form of 'Narsingh' (half lion, half man incarnation of Vishnu for the benefit of his child devotee Prahalad). You have long arms, are the supreme and most exalted being, are glorious, majestic and splendorous, are an embodiment/image of Gyan and bliss, and are eternal, infinite and represented by the seed/root word 'Ra' (which is called the Tarak Mantra and fully described in Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad)—I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially and with humility (39).

आदित्यमण्डलगतं निश्चितार्थ—स्वरूपिणम् । भक्तप्रियं पद्मनेत्रं भक्तानामीप्सितप्रदम् ॥४०॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] सूर्यमण्डल में स्थित, निश्चित अर्थ स्वरूप वाले, भक्तों की कामना पूर्ण करने वाले, कमल नेत्र भगवान् श्रीराम को मेरा प्रणाम है (४०)।

ādityamaṇḍalagataṁ niścītārtha-svarūpiṇam/
bhaktapriyaṁ padmanetraṁ bhaktānāmīpsitapradam//40//

You are present in the sky like the Sun (and therefore are as splendid and radiant as well as magnificent and majestic as the Sun); you are the absolute truth and irrefutable reality; you are the fulfiller of the wishes of your devotees and are lotus-eyed—I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially and devotionally (40).

कौशल्येयं कलामूर्तिं काकुत्स्थं कमलाप्रियम् । सिंहासने समासीनं नित्यव्रतमकल्मषम् ॥४१॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप कौशल्या के पुत्र (श्रीराम), कलामूर्ति, काकुत्स्थ वंश में उत्पन्न, लक्ष्मी के प्रिय, सिंहासन पर विराजमान, नित्यव्रती एवं निष्पाप हैं (४१)।

kaushalyeyam kalāmūrtim kākutstham kamalāpriyam/
sinhāsane samāsīnam nityavratamakalmaṣam//41//

You (Sri Ram) are the son of Kaushalya, are a personified form of the many fascinating and mysterious virtues of creation known as Kalaa (i.e. the different aspects of creation; here meaning that the Lord is capable of performing maverick tricks, and his sporting activities are mysterious), are born in the clan of Kukustha, are dear to Laxmi, are seated on a throne, are eternally steadfast on your righteous path, vows and promises, are sinless and without any reproach (41).

विश्वामित्रप्रियं दान्तं स्वदारनियतव्रतम् । यज्ञेशं यज्ञपुरुषं यज्ञपालनतत्परम् ॥४२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप विश्वामित्र के अत्यन्त प्रिय, संयमी, एक पत्नीव्रत वाले, यज्ञ के प्रधानपुरुष एवं स्वामी तथा यज्ञपालन में तत्पर हैं (४२)।

viśvāmitrapriyam dāntam svadāranīyatavratam/
yajñeśam yajñapuruṣam yajñapālanatātparam//42//

You are very dear to sage Vishwamitra, are self-restrained, are faithful and committed to your wife, are the chief patron of fire sacrifices and their Lord, and are very eager to protect and uphold the sanctity of such fire sacrifices (42).

सत्यसन्धं जितक्रोधं शरणागत—वत्सलम् । सर्वक्लेशापहरणं विभीषणवरप्रदम् ॥४३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप सत्य प्रतिज्ञ, क्रोध रहित (या क्रोध का जीतने वाले), शरणागत रक्षक, समस्त क्लेशों के नाशक तथा विभीषण को वर देने वाले हैं (४३)।

satyasandham jitakrodham śaraṇāgata-vatsalam/
sarvakleśāpaharaṇam vibhīṣaṇavarapradam//43//

You are committed to truthfulness, are without a trace of anger and vengeance (or are the conqueror of this trait), are the protector of those who have come to take

refuge/shelter in your feet, are the eliminator and destroyer of all sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations, and are the one who had blessed Vibhishan (even though he was a demon and a betrayer of his own brother Ravana) (43).

दशग्रीवहरं रौद्रं केशवं केशिमर्दनम् । बालिप्रमथनं वीरं सुग्रीवेप्सितराज्यदम् ॥४४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप रावण को मारने वाले, भयंकर, केशव, केशी नामक दैत्य के संहारक, बालि को मारने वाले तथा सुग्रीव के इच्छित राज्य देने वाले हैं। आप श्रीराम को मेरा प्रणाम है (४४)।

daśagrīvaharaṁ raudraṁ keśavaṁ keśimardanam/
bālipramathanam vīraṁ sugrīvepsitarājyadam//44//

You are the slayer of the 10-headed Ravana as well as of the most terrible ogre called Keshi. You are called Keshav because you have slayed a demon by that name. You had also killed the brave Baali (the monkey king of Kishkindha) and had bestowed the kingdom to Sugriv (the younger brother of Baali) (44).

नर—वानर—देवैश्च सेवितं हनुमत्प्रियम् । शुद्धं सूक्ष्मं परं शान्तं तारकं ब्रह्मरूपिणम् ॥४५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] नर, वानर एवं देवताओं से सेवित, हनुमान् के अत्यन्त प्रिय, शुद्ध एवं सूक्ष्मरूप, परमशान्त तथा ब्रह्मस्वरूप, समस्त प्राणी मात्र के उद्धारक श्रीराम को मेरा प्रणाम है (४५)।

nara-vānara-devaiśca sevitaṁ hanumatpriyam/
śuddhaṁ sūkṣmaṁ paraṁ śāntaṁ tāraṁ brahmarūpiṇam//45//

You are served by men, monkeys as well as by the Gods. You are very dear to Hanuman, are pure and microcosmic in form (as the soul of the creature), are most tranquil, peaceful and serene by temperament, are an image of the supreme Brahman, and are the liberator and the one who provides deliverance to all the creatures. I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially and humbly (45).

सर्वभूतात्म—भूतस्थं सर्वधारं सनातनम् । सर्वकारणकर्तारं निदानं प्रकृतेः परम् ॥४६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] सभी प्राणियों में आत्मारूप से विराजमान, सभी के आधार, सनातन, समस्त कारणों के कर्ता एवं मायातीत भगवान् श्रीराम को मेरा प्रणाम है (४६)।

sarvabhūtātma-bhūtasthaṁ sarvādhāraṁ sanātanam/
sarvakāraṇakartāraṁ nidānaṁ prakṛteḥ param//46//

You are present in all the creatures as their Atma (soul), are the very foundation on which everything rests, are the truthful, infinite, eternal and absolute reality, are the root of all causes and reasons, are beyond the realm or reach of Maya (delusions) and are the supreme Being—I bow to such a Sri Ram most reverentially and devotionally (46).

निरामयं निराभासं निरवद्यं निरञ्जनम् । नित्यानन्दं निराकारमद्वैतं तमसः परम् ॥४७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] रोगरहित, अप्रत्यक्ष, स्तुतिरहित, निरञ्जन, नित्य, आनन्दस्वरूप, आकार रहित, अद्वितीय एवं अज्ञान रहित श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (४७)।

nirāmayam nirābhāsam niravadyam nirañjanam/
nityānandam nirākāramadvaitam tamasah param//47//

You are disease free (i.e. none of the countless worldly faults and shortcomings ever affects you). Your primary cosmic form is unmanifest, invisible and imperceptible. You are without any attributes; you are pure, holy and divine; you are eternal and infinite; you are an image of bliss, joy and happiness; you are without any form; you are unique, unmatched and unparalleled; and you are free from the taint of ignorance and delusions—I bow before such a Sri Ram reverentially and devotionally (47).

परात्परतरं तत्त्वं सत्यानन्दं चिदात्मकम् । मनसा शिरसा नित्यं प्रणमामि रघूत्तमम् ॥४८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] श्रेष्ठों में श्रेष्ठ, तत्त्वमय, सत्य, आनन्द और ज्ञानस्वरूप, रघुश्रेष्ठ श्रीराम को मन तथा मस्तक से मैं निरन्तर प्रणाम करता हूँ (४८)।

parātparataram tattvam satyānandam cidātmakam/
manasā śirasā nityam praṇamāmi raghūttamam//48//

You are the first among equals and the best amongst the exalted ones, are an embodiment of the essence of knowledge, are the absolute, irrefutable and universal Truth, are an image of bliss as well as of Gyan, and are the best in the clan of Raghu. I bow before you most reverentially daily and regularly with my head and heart (i.e. I give my respects and pay my obeisance to you with my mind, intellect and heart, most sincerely, fully and devotionally) (48).

सूर्यमण्डलमध्यस्थं रामं सीतासमन्वितम् । नमामि पुण्डरीकाक्षममेयं गुरुतत्परम् ॥४९॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] सूर्य मण्डल के मध्य में स्थित, सीता सहित, कमल नेत्र, अमेय तथा गुरु की सेवा में तत्पर श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (४९)।

sūryamaṇḍalamadhyastham rāmaṁ sītāsamanvitam/

namāmi puṇḍarīkākṣamameyaṁ gurutatparam//49//

You are symbolically established in the centre of the Sun (i.e. you are surrounded by a divine and glorious halo which is as splendid as the radiance of the sun), are accompanied by Sita, are lotus-eyed, are measureless, immense and limitless, and are always eager and diligent in the service of your Guru (moral preceptor and teacher). I bow before such a Sri Ram reverentially and devotionally (49).

नमोऽस्तु वासुदेवाय ज्योतिषां पतये नमः । नमोऽस्तु रामदेवाय जगदानन्दरूपिणे ॥५०॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ज्योतियों के स्वामी वासुदेव तथा जगत को आनन्दित करने वाले श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (५०)।

namo'stu vāsudevāya jyotiṣāṁ pataye namaḥ/
namo'stu rāmadevāya jagadānandarūpiṇe//50//

I most reverentially and with humility bow to Vasudeo who is the Lord of light. [Here, light refers to glow of enlightenment, wisdom, knowledge, erudition.]

I bow again before Sri Ram who bestows happiness to the world and is an image of happiness and bliss himself (50).

नमो वेदान्तनिष्ठाय योगिने ब्रह्मवादिने । मायामयनिरासाय प्रसन्नजनसेविने ॥५१॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप वेदान्त शास्त्रनिष्ठ, ब्रह्मवादि, योगी, मायामय और माया से रहित, शरणागतों की रक्षा करने वाले हैं (५१)।

namo vedāntaniṣṭhāya yogine brahmavādine/
māyāmayanirāsāya prasannajanasevine//51//

You are an expert and a strict follower of the tenets and maxims enunciated in Vedant (Upanishads), are an exponent of the knowledge of Brahm (the ultimate, supreme, absolute, irrefutable, incontrovertible reality and the universal truth) as well as are an erudite Yogi (ascetic), are both engulfed by Maya (i.e. engrossed and involved in delusionary activities) and free from it or its influence at the same time, and are the protector of those who have sought your refuge and shelter (51).

वन्दामहे महेशानं चण्ड—कोदण्ड—खण्डनम् । जानकीहृदयानन्द—वर्द्धनं रघुनन्दनम् ॥५२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] शंकर के कठोर धनुष को भंजन करने वाले, जानकी के हृदय के आनन्द को बढ़ाने वाले श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (५२)।

vandāmahe maheśānaṁ caṇḍa-kodaṇḍa-khaṇḍanam/

jānakīhrdayānanda-varddhanaṁ raghunandanam//52//

I praise him who had broken the strong bow of Lord Shiva (at Janakpur in order to marry Sita) and had enhanced the pleasure and happiness of Sita's heart by doing so (52).

उत्फुल्लामल—कोमलोत्पलदल—श्यामाय रामाय ते कामाय प्रमदामनोहरगुणग्रामाय रामात्मने ।
योगारूढ—मुनीन्द्र—मानससरो हंसाय संसारविध्वंसाय स्फुरदोजसे रघुकुलोत्तंसाय पुंसे नमः ॥५३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] विकसित कमल के समान श्यामवर्ण वाले, कामदेव के समान, कामनियों के मन को हरने वाले, गुण समूह वाले, प्राणियों के आत्मा स्वरूप, योगाभ्यास में रत, मुनियों के मान सरोवर में हंस के समान, संसार के दुष्टों के विनाश के लिए प्रकट पराक्रमी, रघुकुल में उत्तम श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (५३)।

utphullāmala-komalotpaladala-śyāmāya rāmāya te kāmāya
pramadāmanoharagunagrāmāya rāmātmane/
yogārūḍha-munīndra-mānasasaro hansāya sansāraavidhvasāya sphuradojase
raghukulottansāya punse namaḥ//53//

I reverentially bow before him (Sri Ram) who has a dark complexion like that of a fully blooming lotus flower, is like Kamdeo-cupid in enchanting/enthraling the mind and heart of beautiful women, is a treasury of virtues, is the Atma/soul of all the creatures, is ever engrossed/involved in Yoga (mediation), is like a swan floating in the lake-like heart of sages and seers, have revealed himself for the destruction of evil forces in this world and is the best in the clan of Raghu (53).

भवोद्भवं वेदविदां वरिष्ठमादित्यं—चन्द्रानलसुप्रभावम् ।
सर्वात्मकं सर्वजगत्स्वरूपं नमामि रामं तमसः परस्तात् ॥५४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] जगत के उत्पत्ति स्थान, वेद—वेत्ताओं में श्रेष्ठ, सूर्य, चाँद एवं अग्नि के समान प्रभाव वाले, सभी प्राणियों के आत्मा स्वरूप एवं विश्व रूप श्रीराम को मैं अज्ञान रहित होकर प्रणाम करता हूँ (५४)।

bhavo/vaṁ vedavidāṁ variṣṭhamādityaṁ-candrānalasuprabhāvam/
sarvātmakaṁ sarvajagatsvarūpaṁ namāmi rāmaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt//54//

I reverentially bow before Sri Ram who is the source of all the creation, is the best amongst those who are experts in the knowledge of the Vedas, is as majestic, stupendous, splendorous, radiant, potent and powerful as the Sun, the Moon and the Fire, is present in the form of Atma/soul of all the creatures as well as of the world at large (i.e. both at the micro as well as the macro level). I do so with proper awareness, devoid of any darkness cast by ignorance and with full consciousness of the truth and reality (54).

निरञ्जनं निष्प्रतिमं निरीहं निराश्रयं निष्कलमप्रपञ्चम् ।
नित्यं ध्रुवं निर्विषयं स्वरूपं निरन्तरं राममहं भजामि ॥५५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] निरञ्जन, मूर्तिरहित, इच्छा रहित, आश्रय रहित, कला तथा प्रपञ्च से रहित, नित्य, ध्रुव तथा विषय रहित भगवान् श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (५५)।

nirañjanam niṣpratimaṁ nirīhaṁ nirāśrayaṁ niṣkalamaprapaṅcam/
nityaṁ dhruvaṁ nirviṣayaṁ svarūpaṁ nirantaraṁ rāmamaham bhajāmi//55//

I worship and most reverentially adore Sri Ram who is ‘Niranjan’ (divine, holy, pure, faultless, blemish-less, dispassionate), is without any image or form, is without any desires or wants, is without any need for taking refuge, shelter or help from anyone else, is without any fraction or part and is also without any deceit, falsehood, imposterings and concealments. He is eternal, truthful, steadfast, absolute, infinite and without any yearnings for pleasures of the sense organs pertaining to this materialistic, artificial, entrapping and deluding mundane world (55).

भवाब्धिपोतं भरताग्रजं तं भक्तप्रियं भानुकुलप्रदीपम् ।
भूतत्रिनाथं भुवनाधिपत्यं भजामि रामं भवरोगवैद्यम् ॥५६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] संसाररूपी सागर को पार करने के लिए जहाज के समान, भरत के बड़े भाई, भक्तों के प्रिय, सूर्यवंश में दीपक के समान, सत्त्व—रज—तम तीनों प्रकार के प्राणियों के स्वामी, संसाररूपी गृह के स्वामी एवं संसाररूपी रोग के लिए वैद्य के समान श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (५६)।

bhavābdhipotaṁ bharatāgrajaṁ taṁ bhaktapriyaṁ bhānukulapradīpam/
bhūtatrīnāthaṁ bhuvanādhīpatyaṁ bhajāmi rāmaṁ bhavarogavaidyaṁ//56//

I worship and most reverentially adore Sri Ram who is like a ship or boat to cross over this world-like ocean, is the elder brother of Bharat, is most dear to his devotees, is like a lighted lamp in the Sun-race, is the Lord of the three categories of creatures classified on the basis of the three classes of characteristics possessed by them called Sata, Raja and Tama respectively, is the master of the household represented by this world, and who is like a doctor for the treatment of the disease represented by all the problems associated with this world (56).

[(i) The three characteristic qualities described above are the basic temperaments of the creature which segregates them into 3 classes as follows—Sata (the noblest quality in a creature marked by noble thoughts and actions), Raja (the medium quality marked by worldly desires and passions) and Tama (the most lowly characteristic marked by propensity towards sins, evils, vices, immorality etc.). (ii) The diseases that afflict a creature in this world are—Daivik (fears pertaining to malignant stars

and Gods), Daihik (fears pertaining to various ailments of the body) and Bhautik (fears pertaining to the myriad problems associated to this mundane world).]

सर्वाधिपत्यं समराङ्गधीरं सत्यं चिदानन्दमयं स्वरूपम् ।
सत्यं शिवं शान्तमयं शरण्यं सनातनं राममहं भजामि ॥५७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] समस्त चराचर के स्वामी, युद्ध में गम्भीर, सच्चिदानन्दरूप, सत्य, शिव, शान्त स्वरूप, शरणागत वत्सल, सनातन पुरुष भगवान् श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (५७)।

sarvādhīpatyaṁ samarāṅgadhīraṁ satyaṁ cidānandamayam svarūpam/
satyaṁ śivaṁ śāntamayam śaraṇyam sanātanaṁ rāmamaham bhajāmi//57//

I worship and most reverentially adore Sri Ram who is the Lord of the entire creation— both animate as well as inanimate, is serious and steadfast during war, is an embodiment of supreme and eternal bliss, joy and happiness, is the ultimate truth and reality, is Shiva (truth and beauty personified), is an image of peace and tranquility, is the benefactor of and benevolent, magnanimous and benign towards those who have taken his refuge, and is the eternal and most ancient ‘Purush’ (or the legendary Viraat Purush representing the male aspect of Nature) (57).

कार्यं क्रियाकारणमप्रमेयं कविं पुराणं कमलायताक्षम् ।
कुमारवेद्यं करुणामयं तं कल्पद्रुमं राममहं भजामि ॥५८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] कारण, कार्य एवं क्रियास्वरूप, अप्रमेय, कवि, पुराणपुरुष, कमल के समान बड़े नेत्र वाले, सनतकुमार आदि ऋषियों के जानने योग्य, करुणामूर्ति तथा कल्पवृक्ष के समान श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (५८)।

kāryam kriyākāraṇamaprameyam kavim purāṇam kamalāyatākṣam/
kumāravedyam karuṇāmayam taṁ kalpadrumaṁ rāmamaham bhajāmi//58//

I worship and most reverentially adore Sri Ram who personifies the cause, the action or deeds and the reward of such actions or deeds undertaken by a creature, who is limitless, measureless and without any parameters, who is a poet par excellence (i.e. well-lettered, scholarly and erudite), who is the legendary male mentioned in the ancient text called ‘Purans’, who is the one who has broad lotus-like eyes, who is worthy to be realised, adored and revered by exalted sages such as Sanat Kumar, who is like an image or personification of mercy, grace and compassion, and who is like the Kalpa-tree (the ever-green, all wish-fulfilling tree of Gods) for the purpose of fulfilment of all my wishes (58).

त्रैलोक्यनाथं सरसीरुहाक्षं दयानिधिं द्वन्द्वविनाशहेतुम् ।

महाबलं वेदनिधिं सुरेशं सनातनं राममहं भजामि ॥५९॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] त्रिलोक के स्वामी, कमलनेत्र, दया सागर, ध्वन्ध (समस्त प्रपन्चों) के विनाश, अत्यन्त पराक्रमी, वेद निधि, देवाताओं के स्वामी, सनातन, श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (५९)।

trailokyanātham sarasīruhākṣam dayānidhiṁ dvandvavināśahetum/
mahābalaṁ vedanidhiṁ sureśam sanātanaṁ rāmamaham bhajāmi//59//

I worship and most reverentially adore Sri Ram who is the Lord of the three worlds (i.e. the terrestrial, the celestial and the subterranean worlds; or the entire cosmos), is lotus-eyed, is an ocean of mercy, kindness and compassion, is the destroyer of all confusions, perplexities, doubts and confoundness pertaining to the artificial and deluding world, is most valorous, valiant and glorious, is a treasury of the knowledge contained in the Vedas, is the Lord of Gods, and is eternal, infinite, truthful and ancient Being (59).

वेदान्तवेद्यं कविमीशितारमनादिमध्यान्तमचिन्त्यमाद्यम् ।
अगोचरं निर्मलमेकरूपं नमामि रामं तमसः परस्तात् ॥६०॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वेदान्त द्वारा जानने योग्य, कवि, ऐश्वर्यशाली, आदि—मध्य—अन्त रहित, अचिन्त्य, आदिपुरुष, इन्द्रियों के अविषय, निर्मल, एकरूप तथा अज्ञान रूपी अन्धकार से रहित राम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (६०)।

vedāntavedyam kavimīśitāramanādimadhyāntamacintyamādyam/
agocaraṁ nirmalamekarūpaṁ namāmi rāmaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt//60//

I bow most reverentially and devotionally to Sri Ram who is realised and understood through the knowledge given by Vedanta (Upanishads), is a poet par excellence (i.e. erudite, scholarly, wise and well-lettered), is endowed with fame, majesty, power and glory, is without a beginning, a middle or an end, is beyond comprehension (i.e. beyond the imagination, reach and grasp of the mind and intellect), is the most ancient first and primary Purush (i.e. the first male aspect of creation), is not the subject that can be understood or grasped or perceived by the sense organs of the creature, is pure, uncorrupt and blemish free, is non-dual and of only one form and shape (i.e. is indivisible and unfractionable) and is without any hint of darkness caused by ignorance (i.e. is most wise, sagacious, erudite, knowledgeable and enlightened) (60).

अशेष—वेदात्मकमादिसंज्ञमजं हरिं विष्णुमनन्तमाद्यम् ।
अपारसंवित्सुखमेकरूपं परात्परं राममहं भजामि ॥६१॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] समस्त वेदों एवं अन्य धर्म ग्रन्थों के स्वरूप, अनादि संज्ञा वाले, अजन्मा, हरि, विष्णु, अनन्त नाम वाले, आदि पुरुष, अपार, ज्ञान एवं सुख स्वरूप, श्रेष्ठों में अतिश्रेष्ठ श्रीराम को मेरा प्रणाम है (६१)।

aśeṣa-vedātmakamādisanjñamajam harim viṣṇumanantamādyam/
apārasanvitsukhamekarūpaṁ parātparam rāmamaham bhajāmi//61//

I worship and most reverentially adore Sri Ram who is an image or personification of all the Vedas and other holy scriptures, has the attributes such as 'being without a beginning and an end', who is without a birth (and, therefore, without a death), has various names such as Hari, Vishnu, Anant (literally, one without an end), is the first and most ancient Purush (i.e. the first male of the creation), is fathomless and has no end (i.e. it is not possible to see his 'other end'), is an image of Gyan as well as of bliss and happiness, is the best amongst those who are exalted, and is the Supreme Being (61).

तत्त्वस्वरूपं पुरुषं पुराणं स्वतेजसा पूरितविश्वमेकम् ।
राजाधिराजं रविमण्डलस्थं विश्वेश्वरं राममहं भजामि ॥६२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] तत्त्वरूप, पुराणपुरुष, अपने तेज द्वारा समस्त विश्व को परिपूर्ण करने वाले, सूर्यमण्डल में स्थित, विश्व के प्रभु, राजाधिराज श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (६२)।

tattvasvarūpaṁ puruṣaṁ purāṇaṁ svatejasā pūritaviśvamekam/
rājādhirājaṁ ravimaṇḍalasthaṁ viśveśvaraṁ rāmamaham bhajāmi//62//

I worship and most reverentially adore Sri Ram who is the essence of metaphysics and spiritualism personified, is the first and most ancient male (Purush) mentioned in the Purans, is the one who illuminates the whole world by his glory and divine light like the sun lights up the world, is present in the centre of the Sun (i.e. is surrounded by a divine, majestic and splendorous halo resembling the radiance of the Sun), is the Lord of the world, and is the Emperor amongst Kings (62).

लोकाभिरामं रघुवंशनाथं हरिं चिदानन्दमयं मुकुन्दम् ।
अशेषविद्याधिपतिं कवीन्द्रं नमामि रामं तमसः परस्तात् ॥६३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] जगत को आनन्दित करने वाले, रघुकुल के स्वामी, आनन्द के स्वरूप, हरि एवं मुकुन्द नाम से जाने जाने वाले, समस्त विद्याओं के स्वामी, अज्ञान रूपी अन्धकार से रहित, कवियों में श्रेष्ठ भगवान् श्रीराम को मेरा नमस्कार है (६३)।

lokābhirāmaṁ raghuvanśanāthaṁ harim cidānandamayaṁ mukundam/
aśeṣavidyādhipatiṁ kavīndraṁ namāmi rāmaṁ tamaṣaḥ parastāt//63//

I bow most reverentially before Sri Ram who enchants the whole world by his stupendous beauty, his wonderful virtues, his glorious characters and his magnificent charm (i.e. he is the one who bestows happiness to the world by his mere presence), is the Lord of Raghu's clan, is an image/embodiment of bliss, joy and happiness, is called 'Hari and Mukund' (one of the various names of Vishnu), is the Lord of all 'Vidya' (knowledge, skill, science, art, craft, expertise etc.), is devoid of ignorance created darkness (and, therefore, is most wise, knowledgeable, erudite, sagacious, enlightened and expert), and is the best amongst poets (i.e. is most honoured and respected amongst those who are well educated, well read, proficient in the languages and well-lettered) (63).

योगीन्द्रसङ्घैश्च सुसेव्यमानं नारायणं निर्मलमादिदेवम् ।
नतोऽस्मि नित्यं जगदेकनाथमादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥६४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] योगियों में श्रेष्ठ, महात्माओं से सेवित, निर्मल तथा आदि देव नारायण, नित्य, संसार के स्वामी, सूर्य के समान तेजस्वी, तम से परे (अर्थात् अज्ञान रूपी अन्धकार से रहित) श्रीराम को मेरा प्रणाम है (६४)।

yogīndrasaṅghaiśca susevyamānaṁ nārāyaṇaṁ nirmalamādidēvam/
natosmi nityaṁ jagadekanāthamādityavarṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt//64//

I bow most reverentially before Sri Ram who is the best amongst Yogis (ascetics), is served by great souls, is pure and uncorrupt, is the ancient and primordial 'Narayan', is eternal, imperishable and constant, is the Lord of the world, is as splendorous, magnificent and glorious as the Sun, and is beyond the reach of ignorance (i.e. ignorance does not touch him; ignorance has not being able to cast its dark shadow on him) (64).

विभूतिदं विश्वसृजं विराजं राजेन्द्रमीशं रघुवंशनाथम् ।
अचिन्त्यमव्यक्तमनन्तमूर्तिं ज्योतिर्मयं राममहं भजामि ॥६५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] विभूति प्रदायक, विश्व के रचयिता, विश्राम के स्थान, राजाओं के राजा, ईश्वर, रघुकुल के स्वामी, अचिन्त्य, अव्यक्त, अनन्त मूर्ति एवं प्रकाशमय श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (६५)।

vibhūtidam viśvasrjaṁ virājaṁ rājendramīśaṁ raghuvanśanātham/
acintyamavyaktamanantamūrtiṁ jyotirmayaṁ rāmamaham bhajāmi//65//

I worship and most reverentially adore Sri Ram who bestows 'Vibhuti' (majesty, glory, pomp, circumstance, magnificence, fame, powers, prosperity, fortunes, grandeur and other noble, praise worthy and divine faculties), is the creator of the whole cosmos, is the final resting place for the creature and its soul, is the Emperor of kings, is the Lord of Raghu's clan, is beyond the imagination and thought processes of the mind and intellect, is beyond description (i.e. the speech is incompetent to

describe or tell anything about him), is without an end, and is self-illuminated (i.e. is an image of glorious and divine light) (65).

अशेष—संसार—विकारहीनमादित्यं पूर्णसुखाभिरामम् ।
समस्तसाक्षिं तमसः परस्तान्नारायणं विष्णुमहं भजामि ॥६६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] जगत के समस्त विकारों से रहित, आदित्य स्वरूप, सर्वसुखदाता एवं आनन्ददाता, सभी के साक्षी, अज्ञानहीन, भगवान् विष्णु एवं नारायण स्वरूप श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (६६)।

aśeṣa-sansāra-vikārahīnamādityagaṃ pūrṇasukhābhirāmam/
samastasākṣiṃ tamaṣaḥ parastānnārāyaṇaṃ viṣṇumahaṃ bhajāmi//66//

I worship and most reverentially adore Sri Ram who is free from all the faults, shortcomings, blemishes, vices and evils associated with this world, is like the glorious and splendorous Sun, is the bestower of all happiness, joy and bliss, is the witness for all, is without any darkness symbolising ignorance, and is Lord Vishnu and Narain (the sustainer) himself (66).

मुनीन्द्रगुह्यं परिपूर्णकामं कलानिधिं कल्मषनाशहेतुम् ।
परात्परं यत्परमं पवित्रं नमामि रामं महतो महान्तम् ॥६७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] श्रेष्ठमुनियों के द्वारा जिनका गुप्त रहस्य समझा गया, पूर्ण कामना वाले, कलानिधि, पाप एवं दोष विनाशक, श्रेष्ठों में अतिश्रेष्ठ, परमपवित्र, महान् से भी महान् भगवान् श्रीराम को मेरा नमस्कार है (६७)।

munīndraguhyam paripūrṇakāmaṃ kalānidhiṃ kalmaṣanāśahetum/
parātparam yatparamaṃ pavitraṃ namāmi rāmaṃ mahato mahāntam//67//

I bow most reverentially to Sri Ram who is so mysterious that only exalted and erudite sages and seers are able to know or realise and experience about him, who is fully contented (i.e. he has no desires, wishes, yearnings etc.), who is a treasure of all arts, crafts, skills and expertise, who is the destroyer of sins and misdeeds and their integrated effects, who is the best amongst the most exalted ones, who is the most pure and holy entity, who is a supreme Being and who is greater than the greatest of Lords (67).

ब्रह्मा विष्णुश्च रुद्रश्च देवेन्द्रो देवतास्तथा । आदित्यादि—ग्रहाश्चैव त्वमेव रघुनन्दन! ॥६८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] हे रघुनन्दन! ब्रह्मा, विष्णु, रुद्र, इत्यादि देवगण, सूर्य आदि ग्रह, सब रूपों में एक आप ही हैं (६८)।

brahmā viṣṇuśca ruñcaśca devenñco devatāstathā/
ādityādi-grahāścaiva tvameva raghunandana! //68//

Oh Raghunandan (Lord Sri Ram)! It is you who are present in myriad forms such as that of Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer), Shiva (the annihilator), Indra (the king of Gods), all other Gods, the Sun and other planets of the solar system etc. (68).

तापसा ऋषयः सिद्धाः साध्याश्च मरुतस्तथा । विप्रा वेदास्तथा यज्ञाः पुराण—धर्मसंहिताः ॥६९॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप तपस्वी, ऋषि, सिद्ध, साध्य, मरुद्गण, ब्राह्मण, वेद, यज्ञ, पुराण तथा धर्मों की संहिता स्वरूप हैं (६९)।

tāpasā ṛṣayaḥ siddhāḥ sādhyāśca marutastathā/
viprā vedāstathā yajñāḥ purāṇa-dharmasanhitāḥ//69//

You are a personification of those who do severe Tapa (austerities and penances) as well as of the Rishis (sages and seers) and Siddhas (mystics, the expert ones, the attained ones). You are the object of worship called ‘Saadhya’; you are the various ‘Maruts’ (i.e. the vital life giving forces of wind), the Brahmins (the learned and wise class of people), the Vedas (representing the scriptures), the ‘Yagyas’ (religious sacrifices), the Purans (the ancient mythological treatises), the various other treatises called ‘Sanghitas of Dharma’ (i.e. the scriptural explanatory volumes which enshrine the elaborate tenets of righteousness, probity, propriety and noble conduct) (69).

वर्णाश्रमास्तथा धर्मा वर्णधर्मास्तथैव च । यक्ष—राक्षस—गन्धर्वा दिक्पाला दिग्गजादयः ॥७०॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप चार वर्ण, चार आश्रम, धर्म, यक्ष, राक्षस, गन्धर्व, दिग्गज और दिग्पाल के रूप भी हैं (७०)।

varṇāśramāstathā dharmā varṇadharmāstathaiva ca /
yakṣha rākṣhasa gandharvā dikpālā diggajādayaḥ // 70 //

You are a personification of the four ‘Varnas’ (i.e. the four segments in which the society has been traditionally classified by the scriptures; these classes are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras), the four ‘Ashrams’ (i.e. the four periods of life in which a person’s age is divided into; Brahmacharaya, Grishastha, Vanprastha and Sanyas) as well as of Dharma (i.e. righteousness, probity, propriety, noble and virtuous conduct and thoughts), ‘Yaksha’ (demi-Gods, the guards of Kuber’s treasures), demons, ‘Gandharvas’ (demi-Gods; celestial musicians), ‘Diggaj’ (the eight mythological elephants who hold the earth aloft at eight strategic points; the word means one who holds the earth), ‘Digpals’ (the custodians of the corners of the world) etc.—all of them are but various manifestations of your one, indivisible true self, i.e. they are none other than you in your myriad forms (70).

सनकादि—मुनिश्रेष्ठास्त्वमेव रघुपुङ्गव! । वसवोऽष्टौ त्रयः काला रुद्रा एकादश स्मृताः ॥७१॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] मुनियों में श्रेष्ठ, सनकादि ऋषि, आठ वसु, तीनों काल एवं एकादश रुद्र आप ही हैं (७१)।

sanakādi-muniśreṣṭhāāstvameva raghupuṅgava! /
vasavoṣṭau trayah kālā ruñcā ekādaśa smṛtāḥ//71//

Sages Sankadi and others who are the best amongst the sages, the eight Vasus¹, the three Kaals² and the eleven Rudras³ are none other than you (71).

[¹The 8 Vasus are the following— The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation).

According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following— Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv, Dhar, Som/Soma (the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som/Soma which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods; it is white in colour and is said to be stored in the moon), Aapaha (water), Anil (wind), Anal (fire), Pratush and Prabhaas.

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolise the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

The Ekakchar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 7, says that these Vasus are manifestations of Brahm in order to provide the creation with the necessities of life.

The Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Kandika (Canto) 1 says that the Vasus were created in the beginning of creation from the first Matra 'A' of OM representing the first leg of the supreme Brahm along with Brahma the creator, the Rig Veda, the Gayatri Chand and the Grahapatya Agni.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Brahman 4, verse no. 16 lists the eight Vasus as follows—Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhash. [The Vasus are the personified forms of the essential things that the supreme Creator created in this world so that the forthcoming creation would be well

provided for and its essential needs taken care of. Some of these essentials were Fire ('Anal') that gave light, heat and energy, Air ('Anil') that breathed life into the creature's body and prevented suffocation, Water that acted as the soothing balm, the lubricating liquid and the nectar of life ('Soma'), a dwelling (a 'Ghar'), whether it was a cave, a crevice, a tree branch or a mud hut that the creature needed for its residence and protection against the vagaries of Nature, the virtue of compassion and kindness ('Kripa') to let one's neighbour too live and enjoy life to the full, and so on and so forth. These were the 'assets' that were personified as various Gods named here.]

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Vasus, along with the Rudras and Adityas etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

The Devi Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, verse no. 4 says that the Vasus are manifestations of the Mother Goddess, who actually represents the dynamism of the supreme transcendental Brahm, the Supreme Being. The Goddess is the energy, authority and powers of Brahm that are employed by the latter to create and control this creation, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level.

The Vasu is this dynamism of Brahm revealed at the macrocosmic level.

The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, verse no. 4/32 says that the Vasus are none but manifestations of Lord Ram who himself is the supreme transcendental Brahm himself.

²The 3 Kaals are the three phases of time, viz. the past, the present and the future.

³The 11 Rudras— The eleven Rudras are actually eleven subtle forms of Lord Shiva. According to the Srimad Bhagvat, 3/12/12, they are in the forms of Gods as follows— (i) Mannu, (ii) Manu, (iii) Mahinas, (iv) Mahaan, (v) Shiva, (vi) Ritdwaj, (vii) Ugraretaa, (viii) Bhav, (ix) Kaal, (x) Vaamdeo, and (xi) Dhritvrat. The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taiteriy Brahman 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra literally means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

According to Vishnu Puran, Ansha (Part) 1, Canto 8, verse nos. 1-11, when the creator Brahma wished to create a son in his own likeness, a child with a blue (purple) tone of the skin (resembling the colour of the sky) was born. The infant began crying aloud and running here and there. At his behaviour, Brahma named the child 'Rudra'—one who cries aloud and causes a nuisance. The child cried again and again seven times, and to calm him down Brahma gave him newer names.

This is how the word 'Rudra' originated. The other names are Bhava, Sharva, Ishaan, Pashupati, Bhim, Ugra and Mahaadev. The other names are Lohitaanga, Manojavaa and Skanda.

According to Shiva Puran, Rudra Sanhita, 18/20-27, Lord Shiva assumed the form of eleven sons of sage Kashyap and his wife Surabhi to fulfill their wish. The names of these eleven manifestations of Shiva are the following—Kapaali, Pingal Bhim, Virupaaksha, Vilohit, Shaastaa, Ajapad, Ahir-burdhanya, Shambhu, Chanda and Bhava.

The various other names assigned to the eleven Rudras according to different Purans are the following—Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparaajeet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharva, and Kapaali.]

तारका दशदिक् चैव त्वमेव रघुनन्दन! । सप्तद्वीपाः समुद्राश्च नागा नद्यस्तथा द्रुमाः ॥७२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] हे रघुनन्दन (श्रीराम)! तारागणों, दशों दिशाएं, सातों द्वीप, समुद्र, पर्वत, नदी, वृक्ष आदि सब रूपों में आप ही हैं (७२)।

tārakā daśadik caiva tvameva raghunandana! /
saptadvīpāḥ samudrāśca nāgā nadyastathā drumāḥ//72//

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! The stars, the ten directions¹, the seven continents, the oceans, the mountains, the rivers, the trees, the snakes and other reptiles—all of them are your varied forms (or you have revealed yourself in all these myriad forms) (72).

[¹The 10 directions are the following—north, north-east, east, south-east, south, south-west, west, north-west, top (zenith) and bottom (nadir).]

स्थावरा जङ्गमाश्चैव त्वमेव रघुनायक! । देव—तिर्यङ्—मनुष्याणां दानवानां तथैव च ॥७३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] हे रघुनायक! स्थावर जङ्गम, देवता, दानव, मानव एवं पशु—पक्षी सब आप ही हैं (७३)।

sthāvarā jaṅgamāścaiva tvameva raghunāyaka! /
deva-tiryāṅ-manuṣyāṇāṁ dānavānāṁ tathaiva ca//73//

Oh Raghunayak (literally, the leader of the Raghu's clan)! The animate as well as the inanimate world, the Gods, the demons, the humans, the animal and the birds—all of them are but your various forms (73).

माता पिता तथा भ्राता त्वमेव रघुवल्लभ! । सर्वेषां त्वं परं ब्रह्म त्वन्मयं सर्वमेव हि ॥७४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] हे रघुवल्लभ (श्रीराम) सभी के माता—पिता एवं भाई आप ही हैं, और आप ही परमब्रह्म हैं तथा सारा संसार आप से ही ओत—प्रोत है (७४)।

mātā pitā tathā bhrātā tvameva raghuvallabha! /
sarvaṣāṁ tvaṁ paraṁ brahma tvaṁmayam sarvameva hi//74//

Oh the dear Lord of King Raghu's family (i.e. Sri Ram)! You are the father, the mother, and the brother of all. You are the supreme Brahm. The whole world is

pervaded by you and you encompass it from all the sides (i.e. you are omnipresent and pervade in this world both inside as well as outside of it) (74).

[To understand this latter concept, we can visualise a sponge or a ball of fluffy cotton in water. The water is present both inside as well as outside the sponge or the ball of cotton.]

त्वमक्षरं परं ज्योतिस्त्वमेव पुरुषोत्तम ! । त्वमेव तारकं ब्रह्म त्वतोऽन्यत्रैव किञ्चन ॥७५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप अक्षर (अर्थात् अविनाशी) तारक ब्रह्म, परमज्योति एवं पुरुषोत्तम हैं। आप के अतिरिक्त कुछ भी नहीं है (७५)।

tvamakṣaram param jyotistvameva puruṣottama! /
tvameva tāraṁ brahma tvattonyannaiva kiñcana//75//

You are the divine letter (i.e. are imperishable because an alphabet does not die. The word 'Akshar' also refers to the divine word OM which is synonymous with the eternal, infinite and supreme Brahman. Another connotation of the word 'Akshar' is the one who does not perish, decay or disintegrate). You are the supreme and most exalted 'Purush' (the male aspect of nature; the Viraat Purush or the macrocosmic gross form of the supreme Brahman). You are a personification of divine light, are self-illuminated and are the 'Tarak Brahman' (i.e. the supreme Authority that delivers the soul from this humdrum world of birth and death, and provides it with emancipation and salvation). There is nothing in this creation that is not you (75).

शान्तं सर्वगतं सूक्ष्मं परं ब्रह्म सनातनम् । राजीवलोचनं रामं प्रणमामि जगत्पतिम् ॥७६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] शान्त, सर्वव्यापक, सूक्ष्म, सनातन पुरुष, परमब्रह्म, कमलनेत्र तथा जगत्पति भगवान् श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (७६)।

śāntaṁ sarvagataṁ sūkṣmaṁ paraṁ brahma sanātanam/
rājīvalocanaṁ rāmaṁ praṇamāmi jagatpatim//76//

I bow most reverentially to Sri Ram who is calm, peaceful, serene and tranquil by temperament, is all-pervading, all-incorporating and omnipresent, is minute and microcosmic in form, is the traditionally truthful, eternal, faultless 'Purush', is the supreme Brahman, is lotus-eyed, and is the Lord of the whole world.' (76).

व्यास उवाच

ततः प्रसन्नः श्रीरामः प्रोवाच मुनिपुङ्गवम् । तुष्टोऽस्मि मुनिशार्दूल ! वृणीष्व वरमुत्तमम् ॥७७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] श्री वेदव्यास जी ने कहा— 'इस प्रकार स्तुति करने पर प्रसन्न होकर भगवान् श्रीराम ने कहा कि हे मुनिश्रेष्ठ नारद, मैं आप से प्रसन्न हूँ, आप अपने मन के अनुसार वर माँगिए' (७७)।

vyāsa uvāca

tataḥ prasannaḥ śrīrāmaḥ provāca munipuṅgavam/
tuṣṭo'smi muniśārdūla! vṛṇīṣva varamuttamam//77//

Sage Veda Vyas said, 'When Narad had prayed to Sri Ram as above, the latter was very pleased with him and said— 'Oh the most exalted sage (Narad), oh the lion (i.e. most superior) amongst sages! I am very pleased with you. Ask for the boon that you desire.' (77).

नारद उवाच

यदि तुष्टोऽसि सर्वज्ञ! श्रीराम करुणानिधे! । त्वन्मूर्तिं दर्शनेनैव कृतार्थोऽहं च सर्वदा ॥७८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] नारदजी ने कहा— 'हे श्रीराम! आप करुणानिधान एवं सर्वज्ञ हैं। आप यदि मुझपर प्रसन्न तो मैं आपके दर्शन मात्र से ही कृतकृत्य हो गया हूँ (७८)।

nārada uvāca

yadi tuṣṭo'si sarvajña! karuṇānidhe śrīrāma! /
tvanmūrtim darśanenaiva kṛtārtho'haṁ ca sarvadā//78//

Sage Narad said, 'Oh Sri Ram! You are all-knowing, merciful and compassionate. If you are indeed pleased with me then I am grateful and privileged in having your 'Darshan' (i.e. a divine, holy, august view or sight; seeing your divine self) (78).

धन्योऽहं कृतकृत्योऽहं पुण्योऽहं पुरुषोत्तम! । अद्य म सफलं जन्म जीवितं सफलं च मे ॥७९॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] हे पुरुषोत्तम! आज मैं आपके दर्शन से धन्य, कृतार्थ तथा पुण्यवान बन गया हूँ और मेरा जन्म लेना तथा जीवन सफल हो गया है (७९)।

dhanyohaṁ kṛtakṛtyo'haṁ puṇyo'haṁ puruṣottama! /
adya ma saphalaṁ janma jīvitam saphalaṁ ca me//79//

Oh Purushottam (the best amongst men—i.e. Sri Ram)! By having your 'Darshan' today, I feel extremely thankful, honoured, privileged, grateful and fortunate. I feel that my birth has been fully rewarded and my life has been successful (79).

अद्य मे सफलं ज्ञानमद्य मे सफलं तपः । अद्य मे सफलं कर्म त्वत्पादाम्भोज—दर्शनात् ॥८०॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप के चरण कमलों के दर्शन से आज मेरा ज्ञान, तपस्या एवं कर्म सभी सफल हो गये हैं (८०)।

adya me saphalaṁ jñānamadya me saphalaṁ tapaḥ/
adya me saphalaṁ karma tvatpādāmbhoja-darśanāt//80//

By having your 'Darshan' today, all the virtuous deeds that I have done, my knowledge and education, my severe austerities and penances etc. are duly rewarded and deemed to be fully successful (80).

अद्य मे सफलं सर्वं त्वन्नामस्मरणात्तथा । त्वत्पादाम्भोरुहद्वन्द्वं सद्भक्तिं देहि राघव! ॥८१॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] हे राघव! आपके नाम स्मरण से आज मेरा सभी कुछ सफल हुआ। अतः आप अपने युगल चरणाबिन्दों की सच्ची भक्ति मुझे प्रदान करें' (८१)।

adya me saphalaṁ sarvaṁ tvannāmasmaraṇāttathā/
tvatpādāmbhoruhadvandvaṁ sadbhaktiṁ dehi rāghava! //81//

Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! Everything is successful and amply rewarded for me today by the virtue of my remembering your holy name. Hence, bestow upon me true and sincere devotion in your holy and august twin feet.' (81).

ततः परमसम्प्रीतः स रामः प्राह नारदम् ।

श्रीराम उवाच

मुनिवर्य्य! महाभाग! मुने! त्विष्टं ददामि ते । यत्त्वया चेप्सितं सर्वं मनसा तद् भविष्यति ॥८२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] इसके पश्चात् अत्यन्त प्रसन्न होकर श्रीराम ने नारद से कहा— 'हे मुनिश्रेष्ठ नारद! मैं आपको इच्छित वर प्रदान करता हूँ कि जो कुछ आप मनोभिलाषित पदार्थ का स्मरण करेंगे वह सभी पूर्ण होगा' (८२)।

tataḥ paramasampṛītaḥ sa rāmaḥ prāha nāradam/

śrīrāma uvāca

munivaryya! mahābhāga! mune! tviṣṭaṁ dadāmi te/
yattvayā cepsitaṁ sarvaṁ manasā tad bhaviṣyati//82//

Thence, Sri Ram was extremely pleased with Narad and said to him, 'Oh the most exalted sage, oh the most fortunate one! I give you your desired boon—whatever you

wish, or will ever wish in future, shall be made available to you (i.e. all your desires will be fulfilled).' (82).

नारद उवाच

वरं न याचे रघुनाथ युष्मत्पादाब्जभक्तिः सततं ममाऽस्तु ।
इदं प्रियं नाथ! वरं प्रयाचे पुनः पुनस्त्वामिदमेव याचे ॥८३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] नारदजी ने कहा— 'हे रघुनाथ! मैं आपसे किसी प्रकार के वर की याचना नहीं करता हूँ। बल्कि यही चाहता हूँ कि आपके चरण कमलों की भक्ति मुझमें निरन्तर बनी रहे। हे नाथ! यही वरदान मैं बार—बार माँगता हूँ (८३)।

nārada uvāca

varam na yāce raghunātha yuṣmatpādābjabhaktiḥ satataṁ mamāstu/
idaṁ priyaṁ nātha! varam prayāce punaḥ punastvāmidameva yāce//83//

Sage Narad replied, 'Oh Raghunath (Sri Ram)! I do not ask you for any boon except that I must have sincere, unfaltering and steady devotion in your lotus-like holy feet. Oh Lord! This is the only boon that I repeatedly seek from you.' (83).

व्यास उवाच

इत्येवमीडितो रामः प्रादात्तस्मै वरोत्तमम् । वीरो राम महातेजाः सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः ॥८४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] श्री वेदव्यासजी ने कहा— 'इस प्रकार नारदजी के स्तुति करने पर परम तेजस्वी, वीर एवं सतचित्त तथा आनन्दमूर्ति श्रीराम ने उनको उत्तम वर प्रदान किया (८४)।

vyāsa uvāca

ityevamīdīto rāmaḥ prādāttasmai varottamam/
vīro rāma mahātejāḥ saccidānandavigrahaḥ//84//

Sage Veda Vyas said, 'In the above way, when Narad had prayed to Sri Ram who is most glorious, majestic, stupendous, brave, righteous and splendorous as well as an image of bliss and happiness, the former (Narad) was provided with the most excellent boon (of devotion) by the Lord (84).

अद्वैतममलं ज्ञानं त्वन्नामस्मरणं तथा । अन्तर्दधे जगन्नाथः पुरतस्तस्य राघवः ॥८५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] इस प्रकार अद्वितीय ब्रह्म का निर्मल ज्ञान तथा अपने नाम का स्मरण प्रदान कर भगवान् श्रीराम नारद के सामने से अन्तर्ध्यान हो गये (८५)।

advaitamamalaṁ jñānaṁ tvannāmasmaraṇaṁ tathā/
antardadhe jagannāthaḥ puratastasya rāghavaḥ//85//

After bestowing Narad with the superior awareness of the supreme and unique entity called Brahm and giving him the boon/blessing of his holy and divine name, Sri Ram vanished from sight of Narad (85).

इति श्रीरघुनाथस्य स्तवराजमनुत्तमम् । सर्वसौभाग्य—सम्पत्तिदायकं मुक्तिदं शुभम् ॥८६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] यह रघुनाथजी का जो उत्तम स्तवराज नामक स्तोत्र है वह समस्त सौभाग्य, सम्पत्ति तथा मुक्ति को देने वाला है (८६)।

iti śrīraghunāthasya stavarājamanuttamam/
sarvasaubhāgya-sampattidāyakaṁ muktidaṁ śubham//86//

This excellent hymn ‘Stavaraj Stotra’ devoted to Sri Ram has the potential of bestowing all the good fortunes, prosperity, all round welfare and auspicious salvation to the seeker/aspirant (86).

कथितं ब्रह्मपुत्रेण वेदानां सारमुत्तमम् । गुह्याद् गुह्यतमं दिव्यं तव स्नेहात्प्रकीर्तितम् ॥८७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ब्रह्माजी के पुत्र नारद के द्वारा कहा हुआ यह स्तोत्र वेदों का सार है एवं अत्यन्त गोपनीय है। इस दिव्य स्तवराज को मैंने तुम्हारे स्नेह से प्रकट किया है (८७)।

kathitaṁ brahmaputrena vedānāṁ sāramuttamam/
guhyād guhyatamaṁ divyaṁ tava snehātprakīrtitam//87//

This divine and holy Stotra (Ram-stavaraj) was pronounced by none other than the son of Brahma (i.e. Narad). It contains the essence of all the Vedas and their secret knowledge. I have brought it to light out of affection for you (87).

यः पठेच्छृणुयाद्वाऽपित्रिसन्ध्यं श्रद्धयाऽन्वितः । ब्रह्महत्यादि—पापानि तत्समानि बहूनि च ॥८८॥
स्वर्णस्तयं सुरापानं गुरुतल्पगतिस्तथा । गोवधाद्युपपापानि अनृतात् सम्भवानि च ॥८९॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] फलश्रुति— जो श्रद्धालु भक्त तीनों काल में इस रामस्तवराज स्तोत्र का पाठ पढ़ेगा अथवा सुनेगा वह ब्रह्म हत्या, अनेक स्वर्ण की चोरी, शराब का पान, गुरु के आशान पर बैठना, गौ—वध तथा असत्य भाषण से उत्पन्न हुए पापों से चाहे वह छोटे हों या बड़े, उन सबों को नष्ट कर देता है (८८—८९)।

yaḥ paṭhecchṛṇuyādvāpitrisandhyaṁ śraddhayānvitaḥ/

brahmahatyādi-pāpāni tatsamāni bahūni ca//88//
 svarṇastayaṃ surāpānaṃ gurutalpagatistathā/
 govadhādyrupapāpāni anṛtāt sambhavāni ca//89//

Benefits of reciting this Stotra:—Those faithful devotees who will read, recite or hear this Stotra (i.e. Ram-stavaraj) during all the periods of time (i.e. in the morning, during the noon and in the evening hours) shall be freed from all small or big sins and misdeed committed by them such as the killing of a Brahmin, theft of gold, drinking wine, sitting on the seat of the teacher, killing of a cow and telling a lie. All such sins, misdeeds and misdemeanours (i.e. their punishments) shall be destroyed or eliminated (i.e. remitted) by the good effect of this Stotra (88-89).

सर्वैः प्रमुच्यते पापैः कलायुत—शतोद्भवैः । मानसं वाचिकं पापं कर्मणा समुपार्जितम् ॥९०॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] इसी प्रकार मनुष्य अनेक कल्पों में मन, वाणी तथा शरीर से किये हुए समस्त पापों से छुटकारा पा जाता है (९०)।

[नोट : १ कल्प = ब्रह्मा का एक दिन = ४३२X१०^७ सांसारिक वर्ष।]

sarvaiḥ pramucyate pāpaiḥ kalāyuta-śatodbhavaiḥ/
 mānaśaṃ vācikaṃ pāpaṃ karmaṇā samupārjitam//90//

In a similar way, a person is able to get rid of all his sins committed over numerous 'Kalpas' (eras; a long period of time) by his body, mind or speech as well as their accumulated results or punishments (90).

[1 Kalpa = 1 day of Brahma = 432 x 107 human years.]

श्रीरामस्मरणेनैव तत्क्षणान् नश्यति ध्रुवम् । इदं सत्यमिदं सत्यं सत्यमेतदिहोच्यते ॥९१॥
 रामं सत्यं परं ब्रह्म रामात् किञ्चिन्न विद्यते । तस्माद्रामस्वरूपं हि सत्यं सत्यमिदं जगत् ॥९२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] यह ध्रुव सत्य है। श्रीराम नाम के स्मरण मात्र से ही तत्काल समस्त पाप नष्ट हो जाते हैं। साथ ही साथ यह भी ध्रुव सत्य है कि श्रीराम परमब्रह्म हैं। श्रीराम के सिवाय कुछ भी नहीं है। अतएव श्रीराम की सत्यता से ही जगत् भी सत्य के समान प्रतीत होता है' (९१—९२)।

śrīrāmasmaraṇenaiva tatkṣaṇān naśyati dhruvam/
 idaṃ satyamidaṃ satyaṃ satyametadihocyate//91//
 rāmaṃ satyaṃ paraṃ brahma rāmāt kiñcinna vidyate/
 tasmādrāmasvarūpaṃ hi satyaṃ satyamidaṃ jagat //92//

All the sins will be immediately destroyed by the mere remembrance of Sri Ram's holy and divine name (with sincerity, earnestly and devotionally). This is undoubtedly

an absolute, irrefutable certainty. Besides this, it is also an absolute truth that Sri Ram is the eternal, truthful, supreme and the ultimate Brahma. There is nothing that is not Sri Ram (or there is nothing in this creation that is besides Sri Ram, or which is not pervaded by Sri Ram, or which is not but an image of Sri Ram, or which is different from and independent of Sri Ram). Hence, this world appears to be true because of the fact that Sri Ram is the ultimate truth.

[That is, we can see the world as a reality because Sri Ram is real and this world is only a manifestation of that reality. For example, we see the tree because it is there, it is real. And it is real because it is another manifested form of Sri Ram who is real and true. Had it not been so, we wouldn't have seen the tree because it wouldn't have been there in the first place. In short, the very existence of the visible world is because of Sri Ram. This world is a visible proof of the existence of Sri Ram.]' (91-92).

सूत उवाच

श्रीरामचन्द्र रघुपुङ्गव राजवर्य! राजेन्द्र राम रघुनायक राघवेश! ।

राजाधिराजरघुनन्दन! रामचन्द्र! दासोऽहमद्य भवतः शरणागतोऽस्मि ॥९३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] सूतजी ने कहा— 'हे श्रीरामचन्द्रजी, हे रघुपुङ्गव, हे राजाओं में श्रेष्ठ, हे राजेन्द्र श्रीराम, हे रघुनायक, हे राघवेश, हे राजाधिराज रघुनन्दन! मैं आपका दास हूँ और आपकी शरण में हूँ (९३)।

sūta uvāca

śrīrāmacandra raghupuṅgava rājavarya!

rājenñca rāma raghunāyaka rāghaveśa! /

rājādhirājaraghunandana! rāmacandra!

dāso'hamadya bhavataḥ śaraṇāgato'smi//93//

Sage Sut said, 'Oh Sri Ramchandra, oh the most exalted in the clan of Raghu, oh the most exalted king, oh the Emperor amongst kings, oh Sri Ram the leader of Raghu's clan, oh the King of kings, oh the son of the Raghu's clan Sri Ram! I am your humble servant (i.e. devotee) and have taken refuge/shelter in your holy feet (93).

वैदेही—सहितं सुरद्रुमतले हेमैर्महामण्डपे मध्ये पुष्पकृतासने मणिमये वीरासने संस्थितम् ।

अग्रे वाचयति प्रभञ्जनसुते तत् त्वं मुनीन्द्रैः परं व्याख्यातं भरतादिभिः परिवृतं रामं भजे श्यामलम् ॥९४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] कल्प वृक्ष के नीचे, स्वर्ण मण्डप में, मणिमय पुष्पों के शुभ आसन पर सीता सहित स्थित श्रीराम जिनके आगे मुनियों द्वारा गाये हुए परमतत्व का गान हनुमान्जी कर रहे हैं एवं जो भरत आदि भाईयों से घिरे हुए हैं, ऐसे श्यामवर्ण भगवान् श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (९४)।

vaidehī-sahitaṁ surañcumatale hemairmahāmaṇḍape madhye puṣpakṛtāsane
maṇimaye vīrāsane sansthitam/
agre vācayati prabhañjanasute tat tvaṁ munīndraiḥ paraṁ vyākhyātaṁ
bharatādibhiḥ parivṛtaṁ rāmaṁ bhaje śyāmalam//94//

Accompanied by Vaidehi (Sita), Sri Ram is seated on a throne covered with flowers under the Kalpa tree¹ (the celestial tree of Gods) in a golden pavilion. Hanuman is standing in front of him singing the sacred hymns which have been composed by erudite sages and seers and highlights the knowledge of the supreme Brahman. Sri Ram is surrounded by Bharat and other brothers. He is dark complexioned. I adore and worship Sri Ram in this form (94).

[¹Kalpa Tree— It is the evergreen tree of the Gods. It is said to possess mystical powers and can bestow all that is desired by an aspirant or seeker. The Botanical name of the Kalpa Tree is Adansonis Digitta; it is also called ‘Parijaat’ meaning ‘descended from the sea’, and ‘Harsingar’ meaning ‘the decoration of the Gods, especially Lord Hari’. The English name of it is Coral Jasmine; in Latin it is called Nyctanthes Arbor Tristis (nyctanthes means the night flower, while arbor tristis means the sad tree). Its flower is said to be worn by the Gods. The orange colour of the flower is used for dying silk and cotton, a practice originating with Buddhist monks. According to legends, it was produced during the churning of the ocean for the search of Amrit, or the ambrosia of eternity and bliss, by the Demons and the Gods. The king of the Gods, Indra, took it away and planted it in his capital at Amravati. According to another legend (in Vishnu Puran), a princess named Parijaat fell in love with the Sun God and followed him throughout the day. As night approached, the Sun became disenchanted with her and did not like her overtures any longer. Disillusioned and despaired, she died, and a tree grew up from the ashes at the site of her funeral pyre. The flower of this tree could not bear the sight of the Sun, and therefore it blooms during the night, and with the crack of dawn, it falls and dies.

The Anand Ramayan (said to be written by sage Valmiki) narrates how the Kalpa Tree was brought to Ayodhya in its Rajya Kand (Purvaardha), Sarga (Canto) 2 full.]

रामं रत्न—किरीट—कुण्डलयुतं केयूर—हारान्वितं सीताऽलङ्कृत—वामभागममलं सिंहासनस्थं विभुम् ।
सुग्रीवादि—हरीश्वरैः सुरगणैः संसेव्यमानं सदा विश्वामित्र—पराशरादि—मुनिभिः संस्तूयमानं प्रभुम् ॥९५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] श्रीराम के मस्तक पर रत्नों का बना हुए किरीट है, कानों में कुण्डल, भुजाओं में बाजूबन्द एवं गले में हार धारण किये हुए हैं। उनके वामभाग में सीताजी सुशोभित हैं। वे स्वच्छ सिंहासन पर आसीन ‘विभु’ हैं, सुग्रीव आदि वानरों से सेवित तथा विश्वामित्र, पराशर आदि ऋषियों के द्वारा स्तुत्य एवं व्यापक हैं। मैं ऐसे श्रीराम को भजता हूँ (९५)।

rāmaṁ ratna-kirīṭa-kuṇḍalayutaṁ keyūra-hārānṛitaṁ sītā'laṅkṛta-
vāmaḥbhāgamamalaṁ sinhāsanasthaṁ vibhum/
sugrīvādi-harīśvaraiḥ suragaṇaiḥ sansevyaṁānaṁ sadā viśvāmitra-parāśarādi-
munibhiḥ sanstūyamānaṁ prabhum //95//

I praise and honour Sri Ram who has a crown and a tiara made of precious stones/gems on his head, wears ear-rings, has armbands on his arms and a necklace around his neck. Sita adorns (i.e. is seated on) his left side. He is seated on a magnificent and gleaming throne, is known by the name of Vibho (an epithet of Vishnu meaning omnipresent, magnanimous, eternal, almighty, majestic Lord), is served by Sugriv and other monkeys, and is praised and honoured by sages such as Vishwamitra and Parashar (95).

सकल—गुण—निधानं योगिभिः स्तूयमानं भुज—विजित—समानं राक्षसेन्द्रादिमानम् ।
महितनृपभयानं सीतया शोभमानं स्मर हृदय विमानं ब्रह्म रामाभिधानम् ॥९६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] समस्त गुणों के भण्डार, योगियों द्वारा स्तुत्य, अपने बाहुबल से महान् राक्षसों का मान—मर्दन करने वाले, सीताजी से सुशोभित, राजाओं के अभिमान को विदीर्ण करने वाले, कामदेव के हृदय को परास्त करने वाले, रामनाम वाले परमब्रह्म स्वरूप श्रीराम को मैं प्रणाम करता हूँ (९६)।

sakala-guṇa-nidhānaṁ yogibhiḥ stūyamānaṁ bhuja-vijita-samānaṁ
rākṣasendrādimaṇaṁ/
mahitaṇṛpabhayānaṁ sītayā śobhamānaṁ smara hṛdaya vimānaṁ brahma
rāmābhidhānaṁ//96//

Lord Sri Ram is a treasury of all virtues and noble characters, is revered, honoured and praised by the Yogis (ascetics), was able to vanquish and crush the pride, haughtiness and arrogance of the demons by the dint of his valour, stupendous strength and powers, is privileged to have Sita by his side, is the one who trounces the pride of kings, is the one who humbles the heart of Kamdeo-cupid (i.e. he makes Kamdeo feel shy and humiliated when the latter compares himself with Sri Ram's enchanting spell), and who is the supreme Brahm himself with the divine name of 'Ram'. I bow before such a Sri Ram most reverentially and devotionally (96).

रघुवर! तव मूर्तिर्मांमके मानसाब्जे नरकगतिहरं ते नामधेयं मुखे मे ।
अनिशमतुलभक्त्या मस्तकं त्वत्पदाब्जं भवजलनिधिमग्नं रक्ष मामार्तबन्धो! ॥९७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] हे रघुवर! आपकी मनोहर मूर्ति मेरे मन में बसी रहे, नरकगति का विनाशक जो आप का नाम है वह मेरे मुख में सर्वदा विराजमान रहे तथा नित्य रामनाम वाले निरन्तर परमभक्ति से मेरा मस्तक आपके चरण कमलों में झुका रहे। इस प्रकार की अभिलाषाओं को पूर्ण कर, हे दीनबन्धु, इस असार संसार में डूबे हुए मुझ दीन को आप उद्धार करें (९७)।

raghuvara! tava mūrtirmāmake mānasābje narakagatiharaṁ te nāmadheyam
mukhe me/
anīśamatulabhaktyā mastakaṁ tvatpadābjaṁ bhavajalanidhimagnaṁ rakṣa
māmārttabandho! //97 //

Oh Raghuvar (Sri Ram)! Let your enchanting and bewitching image be permanently enshrined in my heart, let your holy and divine name which has the potential to destroy the chances of going to hell be ever present in my mouth (i.e. let me constantly and consistently chant or repeat your august name), and let my head always remain bowed at your holy lotus-like feet with devotion and humility.

Oh Lord and friend of the distressed, wretched and miserable ones! By fulfilling my above mentioned wishes, be kind and gracious enough to deliver me from this entrapping, artificial and deluding world in which I find my self trapped and engrossed (97).

रामरत्नमहं वन्दे चित्रकूटपतिं हरिम् । कौशल्याभक्तिसम्भूतं जानकीकण्ठभूषणम् ॥९८॥

इति श्रीराम—रहस्ये सनत्कुमार—संहितायां नारदोक्तश्रीरामस्तवराजं सम्पूर्णम् ।

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] चित्रकूट के अधिपति, कौशल्या की भक्ति से उत्पन्न, जानकी के गले के आभूषण, रत्न स्वरूप श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को मैं वन्दन करता हूँ (९८)।

सनतकुमार संहिता में नारदजी द्वारा बोला हुआ श्रीरामस्तवराज स्तोत्र समाप्त हुआ।

rāmaratnamaharṁ vande citrakūṭapatiṁ harim/ kauśalyābhaktisambhūtaṁ jānakīkaṇṭhabhūṣaṇam//98//

iti śrīrāma-rahasye sanatkumāra-sanhitāyāṁ nāradoktanśrīrāmastavarājāṁ sampūrṇam/

I honour, revere and praise the jewel called Ram who is, inter alia, the Lord of Chitrakoot and Hari (Vishnu). He is born because of the devotion of Kaushalaya (his mother) and is an ornamentation for the neck of Janki (i.e. he is like an invaluable and precious necklace which adorns the bosom of Sita. The allusion to a necklace signifies that even as a woman's beauty and charm is enhanced by her jewellery, chiefly her necklace because it is the central piece to show off her ornamentation and has a pride of place on her body, lying above her heart and on her bosom, Sri Ram too is the greatest and most valuable possession that Sita has. Without him, she would be bare of any honour and decoration) (98).

Thus ends Ram Stavaraj Stotra sung by Narad in Sanatkumar Sanhita.

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(5.2) Ram Ashtak Stotra (by sage Veda Vyas)

श्रीवेदव्यासकृत
रामाष्टकम्

भजे विशेष—सुन्दरं समस्त—पाप—खण्डनम् । स्वभक्त—चित्त—रञ्जनं सदैव राममद्वयम् ॥१॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] जो सर्वाधिक सुन्दर, सभी पापों के विनाशक, अपने भक्तों के चित्त को आनन्द देने वाले, एकमात्र भगवान् श्रीराम हैं उनका मैं सदैव भजन करता हूँ (१)।

śrīvedavyāsakṛta

rāmāṣṭākam

bhaje viśeṣa-sundaram samasta-pāpa-khaṇḍanam/
svabhakta-citta-rañjanam sadaiva rāmamadvayam//1//

I constantly, consistently and persistently worship, praise and adore Sri Ram who is most beautiful and charming, is able to smash all the sins and misdeeds of his devotees, is the one who gives immense joy to the mind and heart of his devotees, and is unique, unparalleled and second to none (1).

जटा—कलाप—शोभितं समस्त—पाप—नाशकम् । स्वभक्त—भीति—भञ्जनं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] सघन जटा से सुशोभित, समस्त पापों को नाश करने वाले, अपने भक्तों को अभय देने वाले एक मात्र भगवान् श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (२)।

jaṭā-kalāpa-śobhitam samasta-pāpa-nāśakam/
svabhakta-bhīti-bhañjanam bhaje ha rāmamadvayam//2//

I remember and concentrate my thoughts on Sri Ram, worship, revere and praise him who is adorned by a matted lock of hairs on his head, is the destroyer of all the sins, provides fearlessness to his devotees, and is unique, unparalleled and without a second (2).

निज—स्वरूप—बोधकं कृपाकरं भवापहम् । समं शिवं निरञ्जनं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] अपने स्वरूप के बोधक, कृपाकारी, संसार सागर से पार कराने वाले, समान दृष्टि, सत्य एवं सुन्दर (शिव), अदृश्य रूप से सब जगह वर्तमान, निर्दोष एकमात्र श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (३)।

nija-svarūpa-bodhakam kṛpākaram bhavāpaham/
samaṁ śivam nirañjanam bhaje ha rāmamadvayam//3//

I remember and concentrate my thoughts on Sri Ram who enlightens the creature about his true and essential form, is the one who shows benevolence, mercy and compassion towards all, is the one who helps to take one across the ocean-like world, has equanimity and is equitable towards all, is the provider of welfare and auspiciousness, is the absolute Truth, is most charming and beautiful (शिव), is blemishless, pure, supreme, divine, faultless and invisible to the naked eyes (निखन). He is matchless, unique and unparalleled. I worship, honour and adore such a Sri Ram (3).

स—प्रपञ्च—कल्पितं ह्यनाम—रूप—वास्तवम् । निराकृतिं निरामयं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] उन्होंने स्वेच्छा से कल्पित मनुष्य का रूप धारण किया है, वे ही वास्तव में सब कुछ हैं, वे नामरूप से रहित, निराकार एवं स्वस्थ हैं— ऐसे एक मात्र श्रीराम का मैं भजन करता हूँ (४)।

sa-prapañca-kalpitaṁ hyanāma-rūpa-vāstavam/
nirākṛtiṁ nirāmayam bhaje ha rāmamadvayam//4//

He had assumed an illusionary human form out of his own free will (i.e. the Lord appeared to be like an ordinary human being though actually he wasn't so), is without a name or form (i.e. is attributeless), is the essential reality and absolute truth, is without a shape or contours, is healthy, does not have any shortcomings, blemishes and faults, is above reproaches, and is unique, unparalleled and without a second— I worship, honour and adore such a Sri Ram (4).

निष्प्रपञ्च—निर्विकल्प—निर्मलं निरामयम् । चिदेकरूप—सन्ततं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वे प्रपञ्च से रहित, निर्मल, स्वच्छ, बिना विकल्प वाले, निरामय, चित्त स्वरूप, अनन्त एवं अद्वितीय हैं। मैं ऐसे श्रीराम का भजन करता हूँ (५)।

niṣprapañca-nirvikalpa-nirmalaṁ nirāmayam/
cidekarūpa-santataṁ bhaje ha rāmamadvayam//5//

He is without delusions, artificiality, deceit and falsehoods, is without an alternative and options, is pure, holy, divine, uncorrupt and pristine, is disease free in the sense that he is without the faults, shortcomings, flaws or blemishes associated with this

body or the world, is pure consciousness, is eternal and is without an end. He is unparalleled, matchless and unique—I worship, adore and honour such a Sri Ram (5).

भवाब्धि—पोत—रूपकं ह्यशेष—देह—कल्पितम् । गुणाकरं कृपाकरं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वे भवसागर पार करने के लिए जहाज के समान हैं, समस्त चराचर संसार में व्याप्त हैं, गुणों के निधि, कृपाशाली एवं अद्वितीय हैं— मैं ऐसे श्रीराम को भजता हूँ (६)।

bhavā'bdhi-pota-rūpakam hyaśeṣa-deha-kalpitam/
guṇākaram kṛpākaram bhaje ha rāmamadvayam//6//

He is like a ship to cross over this ocean-like world, is the one who pervades uniformly in the whole creation, artificial as well as non-artificial, is merciful and gracious, is a fount and treasury of virtuous and noble qualities, and is unique, matchless, unparalleled and without a second—I worship, adore and honour such a Sri Ram (6).

महा—सुवाक्य—बोधकैर्विराजमान—वाक्पदैः । परब्रह्म—व्यापकं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] जो ४ महावाक्यों के द्वारा उद्बोधित हैं, व्यापक, परात्पर, परमब्रह्म स्वरूप एवं अद्वितीय हैं— मैं ऐसे श्रीराम को भजता हूँ (७)।

[नोट : महावाक्य निम्न हैं— तत्त्वमसि, विज्ञानं ब्रह्म, प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म, अयमात्मा ब्रह्म।]

mahā-suvākya-bodhakairvirājamāna-vākpadaih/
parabrahma-vyāpakam bhaje ha rāmamadvayam//7//

He is understood and highlighted by the 4 great truths called 'Maha-vakyas' enunciated by the Vedas (i.e. whose true nature, form and essence is enunciated, clarified and encapsulated by the 4 saying of the Vedas), who is all-pervading, all-incorporating, all-encompassing and omnipresent, is supreme and most exalted, is the embodiment of the supreme Brahm, and is unique, unmatched, unparalleled and without a second— I worship, adore and honour such a Sri Ram (7).

[The 4 great sayings of the Vedas are known as the Mahavakyas. They are the following—(i) That Essence is you, (ii) True knowledge of the Absolute Truth is the knowledge of Brahm, (iii) Knowledge of the pure Conscious Self is equivalent to the knowledge of the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahm, and (iv) My Atma (soul; pure conscious self) is Brahm (the supreme cosmic Consciousness) personified.

These 'Mahavakyas' or the great spiritual Truths have been narrated and explained in the following Upanishads:

(i) Rig Veda—Atmabodha Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 2, 4; Mudgal Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-3.

(ii) Sam Veda—Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 6, section 16, verse no. 3 (Tattwamasi); Sanyas Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 48; Yogchudamani Upanishad, verse nos. 82-83.

(iii) Shukla Yajur Veda—Paingalo-panishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2-5; Canto 4, verse nos. 23-28; Mandal Brahmin Upanishad, Brahman 2, section 2, verse no. 5; Brahman 2, section 4, verse no. 4; Brahman 3, section 1, verse no. 6; Brahman 3, section 2, verse no. 2; Adhyatma Upanishad, verse nos. 2, 10 (So-a-Ham), 30-31 (Tattwamasi); Subal Upanishad, Section/Canto 6, verse nos. 2-7.

(iv) Krishna Yajur Veda—Shuk-Rahasyo-panishad, verse no. 22; Kaivalya Upanishad, verse nos. 16, 18-19; Sarwasaar Upanishad, verse no. 12-14; Varaaha Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 32, 37; Avadhut Upanishad, verse no. 2 (Tattwamasi); Tejobindu Upanishad, Canto 3, verse nos. 60-74; Canto 5, verse no. 5; Panch Brahm Upanishad, verse no. 28 (So-a-ham); Brahm Vidya Upanishad, verse no. 34, 78-79; Brahm Bindu Upanishad, verse no. 8; Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 1, verse nos. 131-133..

(v) Atharva Veda—Atma Upanishad, specially verse no. 1-C, 1-D, 1-E, 8, and 22-25; Naradparivrajak Upanishad, Canto 7, verse no. 8; Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15; Canto 6, paragraph no. 22; Canto 8, paragraph nos. 5-6; Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 13-14; Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 2; Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 3, verse no. 9; Annapurna Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 2, 8, 20-21, 57, 65, 74, 95; Mahavakya Upanishad, verse nos. 6-9, 11; Hayagriva Upanishad, verse no. 15; Narad Parivrajak Upanishad, Canto 6, paragraph nos. 3-4; Canto 7, verse no. 8; Param Hans Parivrajak Upanishad, paragraph nos. 3-4; Tripura Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 20.]

शिवप्रदं सुखप्रदं भवच्छिदं भ्रमापहम् । विराजमानदैशिकं भजे ह राममद्वयम् ॥८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वे कल्याणकारी एवं शान्ति प्रदान करने वाले, सुख प्रदान करने वाले, भवसागर के जाल का विच्छेदन करने वाले, भ्रम निवारक, अपने पुर में विराजमान, अद्वितीय हैं— मैं ऐसे श्रीराम का भजन करता हूँ (८)।

śivapradam sukhapradam bhavacchidam bhramāpaham/
virājamānadaīśikam bhaje ha rāmamadvayam//8//

He is the bestower of well-being and auspiciousness as well as peace, tranquility, happiness and bliss, is the one who can dismantle the net cast by this ocean-like delusionary, entrapping and mundane world, is the one who removes all doubts, confusions, delusions, misconceptions and vexations, who resides in his holy abode, and is unique, unmatched, unparalleled and without a second—I worship, adore and honour such a Sri Ram (8).

फलश्रुतिः

रामाष्टकं पठति यः सुकरं सुपुण्यं व्यासेन भाषितमिदं शृणुते मनुष्यः ।

विद्यां श्रियं विपुल—सौख्यमनन्तकीर्तिं सम्प्राप्य देहविलये लभते च मोक्षम् ॥९॥

महर्षि—व्यासविरचितं रामाष्टकं सम्पूर्णम् ।

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] श्रीवेदव्यासजी रचित इस पुण्यकारी रामाष्टक का जो मनुष्य पाठ एवं श्रवण करता है उसकी विद्या, श्री, अनन्त सुख, कीर्ति निरन्तर बढ़ती ही रहती है। मृत्यु के बाद वह परमपद मोक्ष प्राप्त करता है (९)।

महर्षि वेदव्यासजी द्वारा रचित श्रीरामाष्टक स्तोत्र समाप्त हुआ।

phalaśrutiḥ

rāmāṣṭakam paṭhati yaḥ sukaram supuṇyam vyāsenā bhāṣitamidaṁ śrīṇute
manuṣyaḥ/
vidyām śriyam vipulā-saukhyamanantakīrtim samprāpya dehavilaye labhate ca
mokṣam//9//

maharṣi-vyāsaviracitaṁ rāmāṣṭakam sampūrṇam/

Benefits of reciting this Stotra:- Those who read, recite or hear this auspicious 8 verse Stotra called ‘Ramashtak’ composed by Sage Veda Vyas are bestowed with the blessings of eternal happiness, fame and glory, knowledge, erudition and wisdom, prosperity and wealth, success and accomplishments—and these blessings go on increasing day by day. At the time of death, such persons attain the highest stature obtainable by the soul by attaining emancipation and salvation, called ‘Moksha’ (9).

Thus ends ‘Ramashtak’ Stotra composed by Sage Veda Vyas.

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(5.3) Raghunaath Ashtak Stotra

रघुनाथाष्टकम्

शुनासीराधीशैरवनितलज्जप्तीडितगुणं प्रकृत्याऽजंजातं तपनकुलचण्डांशुमपरम् ।
सिते वृद्धिं ताराधिपतिमिव यन्तं निजगृहे स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥१॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] वायु, सूर्य तथा इन्द्र आदि समस्त देवताओं के द्वारा प्रार्थना करने पर पृथ्वी पर अवतार धारण करने वाले, दया—दक्षिणा आदि प्रशस्त गुणों से युक्त, वास्तविक रूप में अज एवं व्यवहारिक दृश्य रूप में प्रचण्ड, प्रखर किरणों से सुशोभित, सूर्यवंश में उत्पन्न, अपने राजभवन में शुक्लपक्ष स्थित चन्द्रमा के समान दिनोंदिन बढ़ने वाले, देवताओं से आनन्दपूर्वक स्तुत्य एवं सीता सहित रघुनाथजी (श्रीराम) को मैं सानन्द प्रणाम करता हूँ। वे सुरो में उत्तम हैं (१)।

raghunāthāṣṭakam

śunāsīrādhiśairavanitalajñaptiḍitaḡaṇaṁ prakṛtyā'janjātaṁ
 tapanakulacaṇḍānśumaparam/
 site vṛddhiṁ tārādhipatimiva yantaṁ nijagrhe sa-sītaṁ sānandaṁ praṇata
 raghunāthaṁ suranutam//1//

Born on the earth because of prayers of the Wind-God, the Sun-God, Indra and other Gods, bestowed with the noble and virtuous qualities such as mercy, compassion, charity and magnanimity, unborn in reality but visible in the form of brilliant rays of splendorous light manifested in the Sun-race, growing up regularly in the palace (of his father at Ayodhya) like the moon during the bright lunar fortnight, and worshipped, honoured and revered by all the Gods—I bow most reverentially and with joy before Raghunath (Sri Ram) who is accompanied by Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and is worshipped by them also (1).

निहन्तारं शैवं धनुर्वि इवेक्षुं नृपगणे पथि ज्याकृष्टेन प्रबलभृगुवर्यस्य शमनम् ।
 विहारं गार्हस्थ्यं तदनु भजमानं सुविमलं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] समस्त राजाओं के सामने शिव धनुष को इक्षुदण्ड (ईख) के समान तीन टुकड़ों में तोड़ने वाले, मार्ग में अत्यन्त क्रोधीरूप में मिले, धनुष की प्रत्यंचा खींचे हुए परशुरामजी के क्रोध को शान्त करने वाले, अत्यन्त पवित्र गृहस्थाश्रम का सेवन करने वाले एवं देवताओं द्वारा स्तुत्य, सीता सहित रघुनाथजी (श्रीराम) को मैं सानन्द प्रणाम करता हूँ। वे सुरों में उत्तम हैं (२)।

nihantāraṁ śaivam dhanuriva ivekṣum nṛpagaṇe pathi jyākrṣṭena
 prabalabhr̥guvaryasya śamanam/
 vihāraṁ gār'hasthyaṁ tadanu bhajamānaṁ suvimalaṁ sa-sītaṁ sānandaṁ
 praṇata raghunāthaṁ suranutam//2//

He (Sri Ram) is the one who had broken the formidable bow of Lord Shiva into three parts in front of all the assembled kings as if he was effortlessly breaking the 'Ikshu dand' (the sugarcane stem); he had calmed down the furious anger of sage Parashuram who had intercepted him (i.e. the marriage party of Sri Ram while it was on its way back to Ayodhya after the marriage with Sita at Janakpur) with a bow stringed and ready (to avenge the breaking of Shiva's bow), and he had lived like a dutiful and righteous householder—I bow most reverentially and cheerfully before such a Sri Ram along with Sita. He is the best amidst the Gods and is worshipped by them as well (2).

गुरोराज्ञा नीत्वा वनमनुगतं दारसहितं ससौमित्रिं त्यक्त्वेप्सितमपि सुराणां नृपसुखम् ।
 विरूपाद् राक्षस्याः प्रियविरहसन्तापमनसं ससीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] कुलगुरु वशिष्ठ की आज्ञा से सीता एवं लक्ष्मण सहित वन में प्रस्थान करने वाले, शूर्पणखा के नाक—कान काटने वाले, रावण द्वारा सीता के हरण से बहुत दुःखी, देवताओं से प्रसन्नतापूर्वक स्तुति किये जाने वाले श्रीरघुनाथजी को मैं सीता सहित सानन्द प्रणाम करता हूँ। वे सुरो में उत्तम हैं (३)।

gurorājñā nītvā vanamanugataṁ dārasahitaṁ sasaumitriṁ tyaktvepsitamapi
surāṇāṁ nṛpasukham/
virūpād rākṣasyāḥ priyavirahasantāpamanasaṁ sasītaṁ sānandaṁ praṇata
raghunāthaṁ suranutam//3//

He had gone to the forest along with his wife (Sita) and the son of Sumitra (Laxman) after obtaining permission from his Guru (moral preceptor, sage Vashitha) and forsaking his right to the throne for the pleasure of the Gods even though he had to abandon the comforts of kingdom in the process. There in the forest, he had deformed the demoness (Supernakha, by chopping-off her nose and ears), and had to suffer from the agony of separation from Sita (because she had been abducted by Ravana). I bow most reverentially and cheerfully to Raghunath (Sri Ram) along with Sita. He is the best amongst all the Gods and is worshipped by them also (3).

विराधं स्वर्नीत्वा तदनु च कबन्धं सुररिपुं गतं पम्पातीरे पवनसुत—सम्मेलन—सुखम् ।
गतं किष्किन्धायां विदित—गुण—सुग्रीव—सचिवं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] विराध नामक राक्षस को उत्तम गति देकर अक्षयधाम को पहुँचाने वाले एवं देवताओं के शत्रु कबन्ध को नष्ट करने वाले, पम्पा नामक सरोवर के तीर पर पवनसुत हनुमान् के मिलन से सुख से आनन्दित होने वाले, किष्किन्धा नगरी में बाली का वध कर सुग्रीव को राज्य प्रदान करने वाले एवं सीता सहित भगवान् रघुनाथजी को मैं सानन्द प्रणाम करता हूँ। वे सुरो में उत्तम हैं (४)।

virādhāṁ svarnītvā tadanu ca kabandhaṁ suraripuṁ gataṁ pampātīre
pavanasuta-sammelana-sukham/
gataṁ kiṣkindhāyāṁ vidita-guṇa-sugrīva-sacivaṁ sa-sītaṁ sānandaṁ praṇata
raghunāthaṁ suranutam//4//

He had bestowed the privilege of taking up residence in his supreme and divine abode to the demons Viradh and Kabandh who were enemies of the Gods. After that, he had gone to Lake Pampa and met Hanuman. That meeting gave him immense pleasure. Then he went on to Kishkindha where his fame was established because he had installed Sugriv on its throne after killing (his elder brother) Bali. I most cheerfully and reverentially bow before Sri Ram and Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and worshipped by them as well (4).

प्रियाप्रेक्षोत्कण्ठं जलनिधिगतं वानरयुतं जले सेतुं बद्ध्वा—ऽसुरकुल—निहन्तारमनघम् ।
विशुद्धामर्धाङ्गीं हुतभुजि समीक्षन्तमचलं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] अपनी प्रिया (सीता) को देखने के लिए अत्यन्त उत्कण्ठित वानर सेना के साथ समुद्र किनारे जाकर उस पर पत्थरों का पुल निर्माण करने वाले, रावण आदि समस्त राक्षस कुल को नष्ट करने वाले, निष्पाप स्वरूप तथा कलंक रहित सीता को अग्नि द्वारा प्रकट करने वाले एवं देवताओं से स्तुत्य रघुनाथजी (श्रीराम) को मैं सानन्द प्रणाम करता हूँ। वे सुरो में उत्तम हैं (५)।

priyāprekṣotkanṭham jalaṇidhigataṁ vānarayutaṁ jale setuṁ baddhvā-
'surakula-nihantāramanagham/
viśuddhāmardhāṅgīm hutabhuji samīkṣantamacalaṁ sa-sītaṁ sānandaṁ
praṇata raghunāthaṁ suranutam//5//

He was eager to search out his beloved (Sita) and so went to the shore of the ocean. Helped by the monkey army, he had constructed the stone bridge across it and had eventually killed Ravana and others like him in the demon race. Thereafter, he had retrieved Sita from the purifying fire after establishing her purity and had then accepted her. I most cheerfully and reverentially bow before Sri Ram and Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and worshipped by them as well (5).

विमानं चारुह्याऽनुज—जनकजा—सेवितपद—मयोध्यायां गत्वा नृपपदमवाप्तामजरम् ।
सुयज्ञैस्तृप्तारं निजमुखसुरान् शान्तमनसं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] स्वयं तथा सीता लक्ष्मण सहित विमान पर आरूढ़ होकर लंका से अपने राजधानी अयोध्या में आकर राज्यपद प्राप्त करने वाले, यज्ञ द्वारा प्रमुख देवताओं को प्रसन्न करने वाले, शान्तचित्त ऐसे सीता सहित भगवान् श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को मैं सानन्द प्रणाम करता हूँ। वे सुरो में उत्तम हैं (६)।

vimānaṁ cāruhyā'nuja-janakajā-sevitapada-mayodhyāyām gatvā
nṛpapadamavāptāramajaram/
suyajñāistr̥ptāraṁ nijamukhasurān śāntamanasaṁ sa-sītaṁ sānandaṁ
praṇata raghunāthaṁ suranutam//6//

After that he had boarded the magnificent plane called 'Pushpak' along with his younger brother (Laxman), Janki (Sita) and others who had served him (i.e. monkeys, bears and demons such as Vibhishan). He went back to Ayodhya from Lanka; there he was crowned a king. He performed many elaborate fire sacrifices to please the Gods, and is of a calm, tranquil and peaceful temperament. I most cheerfully and reverentially bow before Sri Ram and Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and worshipped by them as well (6).

प्रजां संस्थातारं विहित—निजधर्मे श्रुतिपथं सदाचारं वेदोदितमपि च कर्तारमखिलम् ।
नृषु प्रेमोद्रेकं निखिलमनुजानां हितकरं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] प्रजा के पालक, वेदशास्त्र विहित स्वधर्म में अपनी प्रजा को प्रवृत्त कराने वाले, स्वयं वेद विहित कार्य करने वाले, प्राणीमात्र में सद्भावना एवं प्रेम प्रकट करने वाले, समस्त मानवों के हितकारी ऐसे सीता सहित भगवान् श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को मैं सानन्द प्रणाम करता हूँ। वे सुरो में उत्तम हैं (७)।

prajāṁ sansthātāraṁ vihitā-nijadharṁ śrutipathāṁ sadācāraṁ vedoditamapi
ca kartāramakhilam/
nṛṣu premodrekaṁ nikhilamanujānāṁ hitakaraṁ sa-sītaṁ sānandaṁ praṇata
raghunāthaṁ suranutam//7//

He was the sustainer, protector and guardian of his subjects as well as was a steadfast follower of Dharma (principles of righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct and auspiciousness), and the path that is sanctified and prescribed by the Vedas (ancient scriptures). He inspired all his subjects and followers to follow that path also. He infused love and compassion in all the creatures by his sterling example, and was a benefactor of human kind. I most cheerfully and reverentially bow before Sri Ram and Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and worshipped by them as well (7).

तमःकीर्त्याशेषाः श्रवणगदनाभ्यां द्विजमुखास्तरिष्यन्ति ज्ञात्वा जगति खलु गन्तारमजनम् ।
अतस्तां संस्थाप्य स्वपुरमनुनेतारमखिलं स—सीतं सानन्दं प्रणत रघुनाथं सुरनुतम् ॥८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] रामराज्य में पाप तो केवल कहने—सुनने की बात ही रह गयी थी (अर्थात् पाप लेशमात्र भी नहीं था)। ब्राह्मण ज्ञान का उपदेश करते थे। अविनाशी भगवान् श्रीराम के राज्य में समस्त प्राणी सद्गति प्राप्त करेंगे ही ऐसा जानकर समस्त प्रजा को अपने साकेत लोक में भेजने वाले ऐसे सीता सहित भगवान् श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को मैं सानन्द प्रणाम करता हूँ। वे सुरो में उत्तम हैं (८)।

tamaḥkīrtyāśeṣāḥ śravaṇagadanābhyāṁ dvijamukhāstariṣyanti jñātvā jagati
khalu gantāramajanam/
atastāṁ sansthāpya svapuramanunetāramakhilāṁ sa-sītaṁ sānandaṁ
praṇata raghunāthaṁ suranutam//8//

During the reign of Sri Ram, 'Paap' (i.e. evils, sins, wickedness, perversions, misdemeanours and misdeeds of all kinds) were not present at all—they were neither heard of or observed anywhere. The Brahmins preached truthful knowledge and wisdom, hearing which the whole world became enlightened and became eligible to get deliverance from the cycle of birth and death. All the subjects of Sri Ram achieved his divine abode (or, all the subjects had become so noble, virtuous and righteous because of their constant interaction with Sri Ram, constant teachings of learned Brahmins and constant diligence on their own part that Sri Ram sent all of them to his divine abode). I most cheerfully and reverentially bow before Sri Ram and Sita. He is the best amongst the Gods and worshipped by them as well (8).

फलश्रुतिः

रघुनाथाष्टकं हृद्यं रघुनाथेन निर्मितम् । पठता पापराशिघ्नं भुक्ति—मुक्ति—प्रदायकम् ॥९॥

रघुनाथाष्टकम् समाप्तं ॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] फलश्रुति— रघुनाथ द्वारा प्रणित इस मनोहर रघुनाथाष्टक का जो भक्त जो पाठ करते हैं उनके समस्त पाप पुंज नष्ट हो जाते हैं और इस लोक में समस्त भोगों का उपभोग कर वे अन्त में मोक्ष पद प्राप्त करते हैं (९)।

श्रीरघुनाथाष्टक समाप्त हुआ।

phalaśrutiḥ

raghunāthāṣṭakam hr̥dyam raghunāthena nirmitam/ paṭhatā pāparāśighnam
bhukti-mukti-pradāyakam//9//

raghunāthāṣṭakam samāptam//

Benefits of reciting this Stotra:- This Stotra called ‘Raghunathashtak’ has the potential to destroy—by the mere reading and recitation of it regularly—all the treasury of accumulated sins and evil deeds as well as misdemeanours and vices that the devotees of Sri Ram might have ever committed (or indulged in). They enjoy the fruits of this world and in the end they attain the supreme state of emancipation and salvation (9).

Thus ends ‘Raghunathashtak’ Stotra.

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(5.4) Sita Ram Ashtak Stotra

सीतारामाष्टकम्

ब्रह्म—महेन्द्र—सुरेन्द्र—मरुद्गण—रुद्र—मुनीन्द्रगणैरति सेव्यं
क्षीर—सरित्पति—तीरमुपेत्य नुतं हि सतामवितारमुदारम् ।
भूमिभर—प्रशमार्थ—मथ प्रथित—प्रकटीकृत—चिद्धन—मूर्ति
त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥९॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] हे रघुनन्दन! आप अत्यन्त उदार एवं सज्जनों के रक्षक हैं। इसलिए अतिरमणीय समुद्रतट (क्षीर सागर) पर ब्रह्मा, विष्णु, इन्द्र, मरुद्गण, रुद्र, मुनिगण आदि

आपकी स्तुति करते हैं। आपही पृथ्वी के भार को उतारने के लिए मर्यादा पुरुषोत्तम चित्तघन स्वरूप श्रीराम के रूप में पृथ्वी पर अवतरित हुए हैं। हे दयानिधान! मैं आपके चरणकमलों की सेवा करता हुआ आपका भजन करता रहूँ, ऐसा वरदान दीजिए (१)।

sītārāmāṣṭakam

brahma-mahendra-surendra-marudgaṇa-rudra-munīndragaṇairati sevyam
kṣīra-sarītpati-tīramupetya nutam hi satāmavitāramudāram/
bhūmibhara-prāsamārtha-matha prathita-prakaṭikṛta-ciddhana-mūrtim
tvām bhajato raghunandana! dehi dayāghana! me svapadāmbujadāsyam//1//

Oh Raghunandan Sri Ram! You are most magnanimous and benevolent as well as a protector of good people. That is why Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer and protector), Indra (the king of Gods), Maruts (the various vital winds; the Wind God), Rudra (Lord Shiva, the concluder), the sages and seers etc., honour, revere, adore, praise, worship and pay their obeisance to you on the shores of the legendary ocean (called the Kshir-sagar—the celestial ocean of milk). You had taken birth (i.e. had manifested) on the earth in the form of Sri Ram who followed the righteous and noble path called Dharma and was eternal bliss and enlightenment personified. You had manifested yourself to remove the burden of the earth (which it faced in the form of the demons who symbolised evil, vices, sins, wickedness, tyranny and cruelty).

Oh the treasury and fount of mercy, kindness and compassion! Give me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you (1).

पद्म—दलायत—लोचन हे रघुवंश—विभूषण देवदयालो!
निर्मल—नीरद—नीलतनोऽखिल—लोकहृदम्बुज—भासक भानो ।
कोमलगात्र—पवित्र—पदाब्ज—रजःकण—पावित—गीतमकान्तं
त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥२॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] हे रघुवंश विभूषण! आप कमल के समान विस्तृत नेत्र वाले हैं। काले कजारे घनघोर मेघ के समान स्वच्छ स्याम सुन्दर शरीर वाले, समस्त लोकों के हृदय कमल को विकसित करने वाले, सूर्य के समान, कोमल शरीर वाले, अपने चरण—कमल के रजकण से सरयूनदी को पवित्र करने वाले, अयोध्या नगरी में स्थित हैं। हे दयानिधान रघुकुल नन्दन! मैं आपके चरणकमलों की सेवा करता हुआ आपका भजन करता रहूँ, ऐसा वरदान दीजिए (२)।

padma-dalāyata-locana he raghuvanśa-vibhūṣaṇa devadayālo!
nirmala-nīrada-nīlatano'khila-lokahṛdambuja-bhāsaka bhāno/
komalagātra-pavitra-padā'bja-rajahkaṇa-pāvita-gītamakāntam
tvām bhajato raghunandana! dehi dayāghana! me svapadāmbujadāsyam//2//

Oh Raghunandan Sri Ram! You are like a jewel (or ornamentation) of the Raghu's clan. Oh the merciful and compassionate Lord! Your eyes are large like the petals of

the lotus flower and your divine body has a complexion resembling the dark hue of rain-bearing dark clouds. You are like the Sun for the development (or enhancement of the pleasure of) the lotus-like heart of the creatures of this world (i.e. your devotees in this world feel exhilarated when they remember you and have an opportunity to witness your love for them). You have a tender body. You have purified and sanctified the river Saryu and have bestowed it with divinity by the virtue of the few specks of dust particles of your feet which you washed in its waters as it passes by the city of Ayodhya in its course.

Oh a treasury of mercy and compassion! Give me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you (2).

पूर्ण परात्पर पालय मामति—दीनमनाथ—मनन्त—सुखाब्धे!
 प्रावृडदभ्र—तडित्—सुमनोहर—पीतवराम्बर राम! नमस्ते ।
 काम—विभञ्जन—कान्ततरानन—काञ्चन—भूषण—रत्नकिरीटं
 त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥३॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप परात्परपूर्ण एवं अनन्त सुखसागर हैं। मुझ अतिदीन एवं अनाथ की रक्षा करें। वर्षाकालीन घनघोर बादलों में चमकती हुई बिजली के समान आपका पिताम्बर है। हे श्रीराम आपको नमस्कार है। आप कामदेव के विनाशक, अतिरमणीय मुख वाले, रत्नजटित सोने का मुकुट धारण किये हुए हैं। हे दयानिधान रघुकुल नन्दन! मैं आपके चरणकमलों की सेवा करता हुआ आपका भजन करता रहूँ, ऐसा वरदान दीजिए (३)।

pūrṇa parātpara pālaya māmāti-dīnamanātha-mananta-sukhābdhe!
 prāvṛḍadabhra-taḍit-sumanohara-pītavarāmbara rāma! namaste/
 kāma-vibhañjana-kāntatarānana-kāñcana-bhūṣaṇa-ratnakirīṭam
 tvām bhajato raghunandana! dehi dayāghana! me svapadāmbujadāsyam//3//

Oh Raghunandan Sri Ram! You are the complete, absolute, supreme and eternal Being; you are a measureless and fathomless ocean of bliss and happiness. Protect me, who am most humble, miserable, distressed, wretched and lowly. Oh Sri Ram who wears a 'Pitambar' (a silk, seamless body wrapping garment worn by Lord Vishnu) which resembles the dazzle of lightening in dark clouds. I bow before you. You are a destroyer of Kamdeo-cupid (i.e. you vanquish and eliminate such negative qualities as lust, passions, greed, amorous tendencies, licentiousness, promiscuity), have a most charming and attractive face/countenance, and wear a golden crown that is studded with gems and jewels.

Oh a treasury of mercy and compassion! Give me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you (3).

दिव्य—शरच्छशिकान्ति—हरोज्ज्वल—मौक्तिक—माल—विशालसुमौले!
 कोटि—रविप्रभ! चारुचरित्र—पवित्र—विचित्र—धनुःशरपाणे
 चण्ड—महाभुज—दण्ड—विखण्डित—राक्षसराज—महागजदण्डं

त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥४॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] शरदकालीन दिव्य चन्द्रमा की कान्ति को अपनी उज्ज्वलता से लजाने वाली मोती की माला को विस्तृतरूप में मुकुट एवं हार के रूप में धारण किये हुए, कोटि सूर्य के समान सुन्दर पवित्र चरित्र वाले, विचित्र धनुष—बाण हाथ में धारण किये हुए, अपनी प्रचण्ड विशाल भुजाओं से राक्षसराज रावण आदि का दर्प खण्ड कर हाथियों के मस्तक को विदीर्ण करने वाले हे श्रीराम रघुकुल नन्दन, मैं आपके चरणकमलों की सेवा करता हुआ आपका भजन करता रहूँ, ऐसा वरदान दीजिए (४)।

divya-śaracchaśikānti-harojjvala-mauktika-māla-viśālasumaule!
koṭi-raviprabha! cāruacaritra-pavitra-vicitra-dhanuḥśarapāṇe
caṇḍa-mahābhujā-daṇḍa-vikhaṇḍita-rākṣasarāja-mahāgajadaṇḍam
tvām bhajato raghunandana! dehi dayāghana! me svapadāmbujadāsyam//4//

Oh Raghunandan Sri Ram! You wear a crown and a necklace made up of a string of gems and pearls which are so magnificent that they put the radiance, majesty, splendour and glow of the beautiful moon-light during the nights of winter to shame. Your character and virtues are as glorious, majestic and splendorous as millions of suns. You hold a magnificent and strange bow and arrow in your hands which resemble a massive baton in your robust arms by which you had trounced and trampled the false pride, haughtiness and arrogance of the demon king (Ravana) even as a strong goad is able to pierce the head (temple) of a great and wild elephant and subdue it.

Oh a treasury of mercy and compassion! Give me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you (4).

दोष—विहिंस्र—भुजङ्ग—सहस्र—सुरोष—महानल—कालकलापे
जन्म—जरा—मरणोर्मि—मनोमद—मन्मथ—नक्र—विचक्र—भवाब्धौ ।
दुःखनिधौ च चिरं पतितं कृपयाऽद्य समुद्धर राम ततो मां
त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥५॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] मैं ऐसे दुःख सागर में पड़ा हुआ हूँ जो अनेक दुष्ट हिंसक सहस्रों सर्पों के रोष रूपी महानल का काल समूह है; जन्म, जरा, मरणरूपी तरंगों से जो युक्त है; मनरूपी मद और भवसागर में कामरूपी भयंकर मगरों से जो युक्त है— ऐसे भवसागर से आप मेरा उद्धार करें। हे श्रीराम रघुकुल नन्दन, मैं आपके चरणकमलों की सेवा करता हुआ आपका भजन करता रहूँ, ऐसा वरदान दीजिए (५)।

doṣa-vihimstra-bhujāṅga-sahatra-suroṣa-mahānala-kālakalāpe
janma-jarā-maraṇormi-manomada-manmatha-nakra-vicakra-bhavābdhau/
duḥkhanidhau ca ciram patitam kṛpayā'dya samuddhara rāma tato mām
tvām bhajato raghunandana! dehi dayāghana! me svapadāmbujadāsyam//5//

Oh Raghunandan Sri Ram! In this fearsome and horrifying ocean-like world full of sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations, there are numerous wild and cruel creatures, thousands of poisonous dragons spewing venomous wrathful fire of vengeance, swirling and ever changing swift currents representing birth, old age and death, terrible and horrifying alligators/crocodiles symbolising ‘Kaam’ (lust, passions, yearnings, greed, desires, licentiousness, promiscuity etc.) and ‘Mada’ (haughtiness, arrogance, pride, ego, hypocrisy) in the form of the mind-heart-intellect complex of the creatures—I have fallen in such an awesome ocean of sorrows and miseries, fears and torments. I earnestly request you to liberate and deliver me from this ocean.

Oh a treasury of mercy and compassion! Give me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you (5).

संसृति—घोर—मदोत्कट—कुञ्जर—तृट्—क्षुद—नीरद—पिण्डित—तुण्डं
दण्डकरोन्मथितं च रजस्तम उन्मद—मोह—मदोज्झितमार्तम् ।
दीनमनन्यगतिं कृपणं शरणागतमाशु विमोचय मूढं
त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥६॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] जिस प्रकार क्षुधा—तृषा से व्याकुल विचरण करने वाले मस्त हाथी को अंकुश द्वारा वश में किया जा सकता है उसी प्रकार पीड़ित मनुष्य जो संसार के दुःख से दुःखित है उसका मद, मोह, मात्सर्य आदि तथा रज—तम आदि दोष नष्ट कर आप मुझे अपनी शरण में लें और मेरा उद्धार करें। हे श्रीराम रघुकुल नन्दन, मैं आपके चरणकमलों की सेवा करता हुआ आपका भजन करता रहूँ, ऐसा वरदान दीजिए (६)।

sansṛti-ghora-madotkaṭa-kuñjara-trṭ-kṣuda-nīrada-piṇḍita-tuṇḍam
daṇḍakaronmathitam ca rajastama unmada-moha-madojjhitamārtam/
dīnamananyagatiṁ kṛpaṇaṁ śaraṇāgatamāśu vimocaya mūḍhaṁ
tvām bhajato raghunandana! dehi dayāghana! me svapadāmbujadāsyam//6//

Oh Raghunandan Sri Ram! Even as a thirsty and hungry elephant who has become wild, agitated and angry due to thirst and hunger is forcefully brought under control by a goad, you must deliver me—who have sought shelter in your august, holy and divine feet—from the various torments such as ‘Mada’ (arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy, pride and ego), ‘Moha’ (attachments, infatuations, delusions), ‘Matsarya’ (envy, jealousy, malice, ill-will) and other faults such as ‘Raj’ (passions, desires, yearnings, greed, selfishness, ambitions, stormy temperament etc. which are collectively called the 2nd quality of a creature) and ‘Tam’ (the most lowly behaviour producing inertia, sins, evils, vices, perverseness etc.) associated with this world. I am most ignorant, foolish, lowly and wretched, but have come to seek refuge in your holy feet nevertheless. So, oh Raghunandan, have mercy on me.

Oh a treasury of mercy and compassion! Give me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you (6).

जन्मशतार्जित—पाप—समन्वित—हृत्कमले पतिते पशुकल्पे
 हे रघुवीर! महारणधीर! दयां कुरु मय्यतिमन्दमनीषे ।
 त्वं जननी भगिनी च पिता मम तावदसि त्ववितापि कृपालो!
 त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥७॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] सैकड़ों जन्मों के संचित पाप से युक्त एवं गिरे पशुतुल्य मेरे हृदय कमल में हे रघुवीर, हे महारणधीर, हे कृपालु मुझ अत्यन्त मूर्ख पर आप दया करें। आप ही माता, पिता, बहन एवं मेरे रक्षक हैं। हे श्रीराम रघुकुल नन्दन, मैं आपके चरणकमलों की सेवा करता हुआ आपका भजन करता रहूँ, ऐसा वरदान दीजिए (७)।

janmaśatārjita-pāpa-samanvita-hṛtkamale patite paśukalpe
 raghuvīra he! mahāraṇadhīra! dayāṁ kuru mayyatimandamanīṣe/
 tvam janani bhagini ca pitā mama tāvadasī tvavitāpi kṛpālo!
 tvāṁ bhajato raghunandana! dehi dayāghana! me svapadāmbujadāsyam//7//

Oh Raghunandan Sri Ram! Due to the sins, evils and misdeeds and their integrated effects accumulated over hundreds of births, my heart has become depraved and degraded to the low level of an animal (i.e. it has become pervert and low like an animal with animal-like instincts devoid of wisdom and discrimination faculty to distinguish between what is good and what is bad), and I am really very foolish and stupid. Oh Raghunandan, oh the valiant and steadfast one in the battle-field! Have mercy on me who am of a very low intellect and utterly stupid. You are my mother, my father, my sister and my protector. So, oh Raghunandan, have mercy on me.

Oh a treasury of mercy and compassion! Give me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you (7).

त्वां तु दयालुमकिञ्चन—वत्सल—मुत्पल हारमपारमुदारं
 राम विहाय कमन्यमनामयमीश! जनं शरणं ननु यायाम् ।
 त्वत्पदपद्ममतः श्रितमेव मुदा खलु देव! सदाऽव ससीतम् ॥
 त्वां भजतो रघुनन्दन! देहि दयाघन! मे स्वपदाम्बुजदास्यम् ॥८॥

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] हे श्रीराम! आप दयालु, गरीब निवाज, कमल की माला धारण किये हुए, उदार हैं। ऐसे आपकी भक्ति परित्याग कर मैं किसकी शरण में जाऊँ? हे देव! आपके चरण कमल का इसीलिए तो मैंने आश्रय लिया है। हे देव, सीता सहित आप मेरी रक्षा करें। हे श्रीराम रघुकुल नन्दन, मैं आपके चरणकमलों की सेवा करता हुआ आपका भजन करता रहूँ, ऐसा वरदान दीजिए (८)।

tvāṁ tu dayālumakiñcana-vatsala-mutpala hāramapāramudārāṁ
 rāma vihāya kamanyamanāmayamīśa! janam śaraṇam nanu yāyām/
 tvatpadapajhāmataḥ śritameva mudā khalu deva! sadā'va sasītam//
 tvāṁ bhajato raghunandana! dehi dayāghana! me svapadāmbujadāsyam//8//

Oh Raghunandan Sri Ram! You are merciful, kind and compassionate, benevolent and magnanimous towards have-nots. You wear a garland of lotus flowers, are gracious and benign. Where shall I go except you who are unique in so many ways? [That is, where will I find someone who is so great, compassionate, merciful, kind, benevolent and magnanimous to take care of me, who am so wretched, lowly, humble, ignorant and stupid.] Oh Lord! That is why I have taken shelter in your holy, divine and august feet. Oh Lord! I beseech you, along with Sita, to give me your protection. So, oh Raghunandan, have mercy on me.

Oh a treasury of mercy and compassion! Give me a boon so that I can have sincere and steadfast devotion in your august and holy lotus-feet, and be able to worship and serve you (8).

फलश्रुतिः

यः करुणामृत—सिन्धुरनाथ—जनोत्तमबन्धुरजोत्तमकारी
भक्तभयोर्मि—भवाऽब्धितरी—सरयू—तटिनीतट—चारु बिहारी ।
तस्य रघुप्रवरस्य निरन्तर—मष्टकमेतदनिष्टहरं वै
यस्तु पठेदमरः स नरो लभतेऽच्युतरामपदाऽम्बुजदास्यम् ॥९॥
सीतारामाष्टकं सम्पूर्णम् ।

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] आप करुणारूपी, अमृत के सागर, दीनजनों के सहायक हैं। आप उत्तमकर्मा एवं भक्तों के भयरूपी तरंगों से युक्त सरयू नदी के तट पर विहार करने वाले हैं। ऐसे आपके अनिष्ट नाशक इस सीतारामाष्टक का जो पाठ करता है वह भक्त अमरता को प्राप्त होता है एवं आपके चरण कमलों की अच्युत सेवा का अधिकारी बनता है (९)।

सीतारामाष्टक स्तोत्र समाप्त हुआ।

phalaśrutiḥ

yaḥ karuṇāmṛta-sindhuranātha-janottamabandhurajottamakārī
bhaktabhayormi-bhavā'bdhitarī-sarayū-taṭinītaṭa-cāru bihārī/
tasya raghupravarasya nirantara-maṣṭakametadaniṣṭaharaṁ vai
yastu paṭhedamaraḥsa naro labhate'cyutarāmapadā'mbujadāsyam//9//

sītārāmāṣṭakaṁ sampūrṇam

Benefits of reciting this Stotra:- You are like an ocean of nectar consisting of mercy, kindness and compassion. You are a protector, helper and supporter of those who are lowly, distressed, humble and deprived. You are righteous and virtuous, are the remover of the fears and torments of your devotees which engulf them like currents and whirlpools in river Saryu. You roam on the banks of the river and are the senior most member of the clan of Raghu. You are a destroyer of the misfortunes and adverse circumstances faced by your devotees. Anyone who reads and recites this 'Sita Ramashtak' Stotra with devotion, humility and conviction is able to attain

immortality and become eligible to serve your holy, divine and august lotus-like feet forever.

Thus ends 'Sita Ramashtak' Stotra.

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(5.5) Ram Raksha Stotra

रामरक्षास्तोत्रम्

विनियोगः

(A) अस्य श्रीरामरक्षास्तोत्रमन्त्रस्य बुधकौशिक ऋषिः श्रीसीतारामचन्द्रो देवता अनुष्टुप् छन्दः सीता शक्तिः श्रीमान् हनुमान् कीलकं श्रीरामचन्द्रप्रीत्यर्थे रामरक्षास्तोत्रजपे विनियोगः ।

rāmarakṣāstotram

viniyogaḥ

asya śrīrāmarakṣāstotramantrasya budhakaūśika; ṣiḥ śrīsītārāmacandro
devatā anuṣṭup chandaḥ sītā śa ā iḥ śrīmān hanumān kīlakaṁ
śrīrāmacandraprītyarthe rāmarakṣāstotrajaṇe viniyogaḥ/

Introduction/Benediction

A- This Ram Raksha Stotra was conceived and propounded by sage Budh Kaushik. The presiding (patron) Gods (deity) are Sita and Sri Ram, celebrations (of the Lord's glories) are the hymns (stanzas), Sita is the Shakti (driving essential force), Hanuman is the fulfiller (or the one who implements or enforces the promises and vows made in it authoritatively), and it is prayed (or asserted, declared) that Sri Ram is pleased by (hearing or singing of) it.

ध्यानम्

(B) ध्यायेदाजानुबाहुं धृतशरधनुषं बद्धपद्मासनस्थं पीतं वासो वसानं
नवकमलदलस्पर्धिनेत्रं प्रसन्नम् । वाममाङ्कारुढसीतामुखकमलमिलल्लोचनं
नीरदाभं नानालंकारदीप्तं दधतमुरुजटामण्डलं रामचन्द्रम् ।।

Dhyānam

dhyāyedājānubāhuṁ dhṛtaśaradhanuṣaṁ baddhapa ù āsanasthaṁ pītaṁ vāso
vasānaṁ navakamaladalaspardhinetraṁ prasannaṁ/

vāmamāṅkārūḍhasītāmukhakamalamilallocanaṁ nīradābhaṁ
nānālāṅkārādīptaṁ dadhatamurujaṭāmaṇḍalaṁ rāmacandram//

Concentration of Mind

B- Sri Ramchandra—who bears a bow and an arrow, is sitting in a meditative posture of concentration called ‘Padmasan’ [a lotus-like posture used by hermits and ascetics while meditating], is wearing a Pitambar [a yellow silk body-wrapping seamless length of garment, worn like male Dhoti; worn by Lord Vishnu], whose pleasant, contented, blissful eyes compete with a newly opened lotus flower (in its beauty, radiance, charm, attractiveness, glow and magnificence) and looks at Sita who is seated to his left, and who has a ‘long’ arm [‘long’ is a figure of speech here, meaning a long reach to protect his devotees], is of a dark complexion which is like the rain bearing clouds, is adorned with various types of ornaments and decorations, and has a large (crown of) matted hairs—should be concentrated (or meditated, focussed attention) upon.

स्तोत्रम्

चरितं रघुनाथस्य शतकोटिप्रविस्तरम् ।
एकैकमक्षरं पुंसां महापातकनाशनम् ॥1॥

stotram

(Hymn)

caritaṁ raghunāthasya śatakoṭipravistaram/
ēkaikamakṣaraṁ puṁsāṁ mahāpātakanāśanam//1//

1. Sri Raghunath's (Lord Sri Ram's) glorious fames, noble characters and peerless virtues, are spread millions of times far and wide (i.e. it is measureless, fathomless, and cannot be described), and each letter (or word, syllable) of it is potent enough to destroy a person's huge (grave) sins and misdemeanours (1).

ध्यात्वा नीलोत्पलश्यामं रामं राजीवलोचनम् ।
जानकीलक्ष्मणोपेतं जटामुकुटमण्डितम् ॥2॥
सासितूणधनुर्बाणपाणिं नक्तंचरान्तकम् ।
स्वलीलया जगत्त्रातुमाविर्भूतमजं विभुम् ॥3॥
रामरक्षां पठेत्प्राज्ञः पापघ्नीं सर्वकामदाम् ।
शिरो मे राघवः पातु भालं दशरथात्मजः ॥4॥

dhyātvā nīlotpalaśyāmaṁ rāmaṁ rājīvalocanam/
jānakīlakṣmaṇopetaṁ jaṭāmukuṭamaṇḍitam//2//
sāsītūṇadhanurbāṇapāṇiṁ naktamcarāntakam/

svalīlayā jagattrāṭumāvirbhūtamajāṃ vibhum//3//
rāmarakṣāṃ paṭhetprājñāḥ pāpaghnīm sarvakāmadām/
śīro me rāghavaḥ pātu bhālaṃ daśarathātmajāḥ//4//

2-4. Lord Sri Ram—who is dark complexioned like a blue lotus, is lotus-eyed, is adorned by a crown of matted hairs, has a sword, a quiver, a bow and an arrow in his hands, is the slayer of demons (i.e. evil, demonic, satanic forces), has manifested himself (as an incarnation assuming a human body/form) by virtue of his delusionary powers for the protection (welfare) of the world, is without birth (i.e. is without a beginning) and is omnipresent and all-pervading—should be remembered (concentrated upon) along with Sita and Laxman. And wise and enlightened persons should read (recite) with due devotion, faith, belief and reverence this Ram Raksha Stotra which is all wishfulfilling and is an eliminator (vanquisher) of all sins, misdemeanours and evil effects of bad deeds and actions (2-4).

कौसल्येयो दृशौ पातु विश्वामित्रप्रियः श्रुती ।
घ्राणं पातु मखत्राता मुखं सौमित्रिवत्सलः ॥ ५ ॥

kausalyeyo dṛśau pātu viśvāmitrapriyaḥ śrutī/
ghrāṇaṃ pātu makhatrātā mukhaṃ saumitrivatsalaḥ//5//

5. [All the epithets that are used in the following verse nos. 5-9, seeking the Lord's protection, apply to Lord Ram.]

The son of Kaushalya (i.e. Lord Sri Ram) should protect my eyes; he who is dear to sage Vishwamitra should secure (keep safely) the ears; the protector of the fire sacrifice (of Vishwamitra) should protect the life, while the dear son of Sumitra (i.e. Laxman, the younger brother of Lord Ram) should protect the mouth (5).

जिह्वां विद्यानिधिः पातु कण्ठं भरतवन्दितः ।
स्कन्धौ दिव्यायुधः पातु भुजौ भग्नेशकार्मुकः ॥ ६ ॥

jihvāṃ vidyānidhiḥ pātu kaṇṭhaṃ bharatavanditaḥ/
skandhau divyāyudhaḥ pātu bhujaḥ bhagneśakārmukaḥ //6 //

6. Let my tongue (speech) be protected by the one who is a treasury of Vidya [knowledge, wisdom, intellect—i.e. Lord Ram], my throat by the one who is praised, revered and adored by Bharat, my shoulders by the one who is armed (adorned) by most divine arms and armaments, and my arms be protected by the one who has broken the (tough) bow of Lord Shiva. (6).

करौ सीतापतिः पातु हृदयं जामदग्न्यजित् ।
मध्यं पातु खरध्वंसी नाभिं जाम्बवदाश्रयः ॥ ७ ॥

karau sītāpatiḥ pātu hṛidayam jāmdagnyajit /

madhyaṁ pātu kharadhvansī nābhiṁ jāmbavadāśrayaḥ//7//

7. Let my hands be protected by the dear Lord of Sita, my heart by the one who had won-over sage Parashuram, my abdominal area by the one who had slayed the demon Khar, navel by the one who was the shelter (refuge) of the bear king Jamvant (7).

सुग्रीवेशः कटी पातु सक्थिनी हनुमत्प्रभुः ।
ऊरु रघूत्तमः पातु रक्षःकुलविनाशकृत् ॥८॥

sugrīveśaḥ kaṭī pātu sakthiniṁ hanumatprabhuḥ/
ūrū raghūttamaḥ pātu rakṣaḥkulavināśakṛt//8//

8. Let my waist be protected by the one who was the Lord of Sugriv, my strengths by the one who is the Lord of Hanuman, and my thighs by the one who is the most exalted amongst Raghu's clan, and is the destroyer of the clan of demons (8).

जानुनी सेतुकृत्पातु जङ्घे दशमुखान्तकः ।
पादौ विभीषणश्रीदः पातु रामोऽखिलं वपुः ॥९॥

jānunī setukṛtpātu jaṅghe daśamukhāntakaḥ/
pādaū vibhīṣaṇaśrīdaḥ pātu rāmo'khilaṁ vapuḥ//9//

9. Let my knee-caps be protected by the one who built (constructed) the bridge (across the ocean), my thighs by the one who is the slayer of Ravana, my feet by the one who gave fame/renown to Vibhishan, and my whole body by Lord Sri Ram (9).

एतां रामबलोपेतां रक्षां यः सुकृती पठेत् ।
स चिरायुः सुखी पुत्री विजयी विनयी भवेत् ॥१०॥

ētāṁ rāmabalopetāṁ rakṣāṁ yaḥ sukṛtī paṭhet/
sa cirāyuḥ sukhī putrī vijayī vinayī bhavet//10//

10. That righteous, noble, virtuous and upright person who is emboldened (or imbued and bestowed) by the inherent (natural) strength of Lord Sri Ram in him and recites (reads with due reverence, faith, belief and devotion) these stanzas of 'Ram Raksha Stotra' is bestowed (or blessed) with a long life, happiness and contentedness, sons (i.e. a happy family life), victory (in all spheres of life) and the qualities of humility, courteousness, civilised behaviour and high pedigree (10).

पातालभूतलव्योमचारिणश्छद्मचारिणः ।
न द्रष्टुमपि शक्तास्ते रक्षितं रामनामभिः ॥११॥

yu pātālabhūtalavyomacārīṇaścha cārīṇaḥ/
na draṣṭumapi śa ā āste rakṣitaṁ rāmanāmabhiḥ//11//

11. Those souls (who have not attained salvation and have become ghosts, hobgoblins or evil spirits), who roam about in the subterranean (underground), terrestrial (earth) or celestial (sky) worlds in a disguised form (and pounce upon living creatures to cast their evil spell on them), cannot even glance at a person who is protected by the (various) names of Lord Sri Ram (as a protective shield or armour against these evil spirits) (11).

रामेति रामभद्रेति रामचन्द्रेति वा स्मरन् ।
नरो न लिप्यते पापैर्भुक्तिं मुक्तिं च विन्दति ॥12॥

rāmeti rāmabhadreti rāmacandreti vā smaran/
naro na lipyate pāpairbhuktiṁ muktiṁ ca vindati//12//

12. By remembering (the various names of Lord Sri Ram such as) Ram, Ram Bhadra (literally meaning, Ram the gentle, pious, virtuous one) and Ram Chandra (meaning, Ram who is as beautiful, soothing and comforting as the moon), a person does not become engrossed in (i.e. engulfed by, captivated by) sins, vices, misdemeanours, evil deeds and thoughts, and at the same time enjoys all the comforts of this world (while alive) and achieves emancipation and salvation (in the end) (12).

जगज्जैत्रैकमन्त्रेण रामनाम्नाभिरक्षितम् ।
यः कण्ठे धारयेत्तस्य करस्थाः सर्वसिद्धयः ॥13॥

jagajjaitraikamantreṇa rāmanāmnābhirakṣitam/
yaḥ kaṇṭhe dhārayettasya karasthāḥ sarvasiddhayāḥ//13//

13. Any person who learns by heart [not by rote, but with understanding, belief, conviction, faith and devotion] this Stotra—which is protected (patronised) by Lord Sri Ram's name and which in turn is the only Mantra potent enough to enable one to conquer the world—can control or have power or spell over all the Siddhis (i.e. all the Siddhis are under his command). [There are 8 types of Siddhis viz.—Anima, Garima, Mahima, Laghima, Prapti, Prakamya, Ishvatwa, Vashitwa.] (13).

वज्रपंजरनामेदं यो रामकवचं स्मरेत् ।
अव्याहताज्ञः सर्वत्र लभते जयमङ्गम् ॥14॥

vajrapaṇjaraṇāmedaṁ yo rāmakavacaṁ smaret/
avyāhatājñāḥ sarvatra labhate jayamaṅgam//14//

14. Those persons who remember (invoke) this unbreakable armour of Lord Sri Ram called 'Vajra-Panjar' (an unbreakable shield which is hard, invincible like the Indra's weapon Vajra and which cannot be ruptured, pierced or split), are always obeyed

everywhere (i.e. no one dare do anything against their wishes), and he gets applause, fame and auspiciousness everywhere at all times (14).

आदिष्टवान्यथा स्वप्ने रामरक्षामिमां हरः ।
तथा लिखितवान्प्रातः प्रबुद्धो बुधकौशिकः ॥15॥

ādiṣṭavānyathā svapne rāmarakṣāmimāṁ haraḥ/
tathā likhitavānprātaḥ prabuddho budhakauśikaḥ//15//

15. In the very manner in which Lord Shiva had instructed these stanzas of Ram Raksha Stotra (be composed) to sage Budh Kaushik in his dreams, he had written it down exactly as instructed when he woke up in the morning (15).

आरामः कल्पवृक्षाणां विरामः सकलापदाम् ।
अभिरामस्त्रिलोकानां रामः श्रीमान्स नः प्रभुः ॥16॥

ārāmaḥ kalpavṛkṣāṇāṁ virāmaḥ sakalāpadām/
abhirāmaṭṭīlokānāṁ rāmaḥ śrīmānsa naḥ prabhuḥ//16//

16. Lord Sri Ram—who is like a garden of Kalpa Trees (i.e. is full of such potential, ability or qualities which can fulfil all desires of any kind of his devotees, for even one Kalpa Tree is able to do it, so when there are numerous such trees at a place, what to talk of their potential!), is the one who brings to an end (i.e. helps one to overcome or surmount) all difficulties, troubles, problems, hurdles and hindrances (faced by a person in achieving success in his endeavours), who is the most beautiful (charming and captivating; here, ‘beautiful’ not only refers to his physical charm but more so to his virtues, noble characters, glories and fame)—is our Lord (16).

तरुणौ रूपसम्पन्नौ सुकुमारौ महाबलौ ।
पुण्डरीकविशालाक्षौ चिरकृष्णाजिनाम्बरौ ॥17॥
फलमूलाशिनौ दान्तौ तापसौ ब्रह्मचारिणौ ।
पुत्रौ दशरथस्यैतौ भ्रातरौ रामलक्ष्मणौ ॥18॥
शरण्यौ सर्वसत्त्वानां श्रेष्ठौ सर्वधनुष्मताम् ।
रक्षःकुलनिहन्तारौ त्रायेतां नो रघूत्तमौ ॥19॥

taruṇau rūpasampannau sukumārau mahābalau/
puṇḍarīkaviśālākṣau cīrakṛṣṇājinaṁbarau//17//
phalamūlāśinau dāntau tāpasau brahmacāriṇau/
putrau daśarathasyaitau bhrātarau rāmalakṣmaṇau//18//
śaraṇyau sarvasattvānāṁ śreṣṭhau sarvadhanuṣmatām/
rakṣaḥkulanihantārau trāyetāṁ no raghūttamau//19//

17-19. He, who is of (an eternal) young age (i.e. is perpetually youthful), of a beautiful countenance, is soft and tender (in heart, thoughts and feelings; ‘tender’

should not be misinterpreted as a soft, well-cared skin or body alone, though it also means that), most strong and valorous, has eyes like large lotuses, who wears a Pitambar and the hide of a dark-skinned deer, eats fruits and roots, is restrained (i.e. has control over his desires and sense organs) is like an ascetic or a hermit, is a celibate, gives shelter/refuge to all creatures, is the best among all those who hold a bow (i.e. is the best archer) and is the destroyer (eliminator) of the demon clan (representing evils and vices)—that Lord Sri Ram, who is the best in Raghu's clan and is the son of Dasrath, together with Laxman, should protect us (17-19).

आत्तसज्जधनुषाविषुस्पृशा—वक्षयाशुगनिषङ्गसङ्गिनौ ।
रक्षणाय मम रामलक्ष्मणा—वग्रतः पथि सदैव गच्छताम् ।।20 ।।

āttasajjadhanuṣāviṣuṣprśā-vakṣayāśuganiṣaṅgasāṅginau/
rakṣaṇāya mama rāmalakṣmaṇā-vagrataḥ pathi sadaiva gacchatām//20//

20. Lord Sri Ram and Laxman—who have got a stringed bow at the ready, who are touching the arrows and have a quiver full of infallible and invincible arrows—should walk in my vanguard (in my front) on the path to protect me (20).

संनद्धः कवची खड्गी चापबाणधरो युवा ।
गच्छन्मनोरथान्श्च रामः पातु सलक्ष्मणः ।।21 ।।

sannaddhaḥ kavacī khaṅgī cāpabāṇadharo yuvā/
gacchanmanorathānnaśca rāmaḥ pātu salakṣmaṇaḥ//21//

21. Lord Sri Ram, who is always ready, acting, agile, earnest and diligent, who wears a strong armour, has a sword in his hand, bears a bow and an arrow, and is of a young (i.e. an eternally) youthful age, should walk in front of us along with Laxman and protect our desires, intentions, wishes and hopes (i.e. ensure that they are fulfilled) (21).

रामो दाशरथिः शूरो लक्ष्मणानुचरो बली ।
काकुत्स्थः पुरुषः पूर्णः कौसल्येयो रघूत्तमः ।।22 ।।
वेदान्तवेद्यो यज्ञेशः पुराणपुरुषोत्तमः ।
जानकीवल्लभः श्रीमानप्रमेयपराक्रमः ।।23 ।।
इत्येतानि जपन्नित्यं मद्भक्तः श्रद्धयान्वितः ।
अश्वमेधाधिकं पुण्यं सम्प्राप्नोति न संशयः ।।24 ।।

rāmo dāśarathiḥ śūro lakṣmaṇānucaro balī/
kākutsthaḥ puruṣaḥ pūrṇaḥ kausalyeyo raghūttamaḥ//22//
vedāntavedyo yajñeśaḥ purāṇapuruṣottamaḥ/
jānakīvallabhaḥ śrīmānaprameyaparākramaḥ//23//
ityetāni japannityaṁ madbhaktaḥ śraddhayānvitaḥ/
aśvamedhādhikaṁ puṇyaṁ sampṛānpoti na sanśayaḥ//24//

22-24. [The Lord asserts that—] 'Lord Ram, the son of Dasrath, the most valours, brave and courageous, whose follower is Laxman and who is the most strong, is an heir to king Kukutastha of the Sun-dynasty, is manly (brave, dignified, noble), is complete in all respects (because he is a manifestation of the Supreme Brahm, and therefore lacks nothing, is all encompassing and is encompassed by all), is the son of Kaushalya, is the most exalted, the best and the most superior in the clan of Raghu, is the essence of and an expert in Vedant (Upnishads, the pristine philosophy and the essence of the 4 Vedas), is the patron Lord of all Yagyas [fire sacrifices, vows and austerities], is the most exalted and Supreme 'Purush' [macrocosmic Virat Purush or Lord] mentioned in and praised by the Purans, is the dear (husband) of Sita, is the most honoured, respected and revered one, and has limitless, boundless and measureless valour, power, prowess and might—by repeating (chanting) these 'names' (or remembering, recalling or thinking of these qualities, virtues, characters or specilities) daily (i.e. as a routin, or as a practice) with due faith, belief, respect and devotion, my devotee gets a greater reward or fruit than performing a Horse-sacrifice. There is no doubt (or hesitation, confusion, suspicion) about it.' (22-24).

रामं दूर्वादलश्यामं पद्माक्षं पीतवाससम् ।
स्तुवन्ति नामभिर्दिव्यैर्न ते संसारिणो नराः ।।25 ।।

rāmaṁ dūrvādalaśyāmaṁ padmākṣaṁ pītavāsasaṁ/
stuvanti nāmabhirdivyairna te sansāriṇo narāḥ//25//

25. Those who worship and adore the Lord Sri Ram—who is dark complexion like a grass blade [a kind of grass named *Igrostis Linearis*] is lotus-eyed and wears a Pitambar—with these divine (holy, powerful, potent, mystical) names (as described in stanza 22-24), do not fall in the eddy of the whirlpool-like mundane world (i.e. this delusionary existence and its entrapping snares) (25).

रामं लक्ष्मणपूर्वजं रघुवरं सीतापतिं सुन्दरं
काकुत्स्थं करुणार्णवं गुणनिधिं विप्रप्रियं धार्मिकम् ।।
राजेन्द्रं सत्यसंधं दशरथतनयं श्यामलं शान्तमूर्तिं
वन्दे लोकाभिरामं रघुकुलतिलकं राघवं रावणारिम् ।।26 ।।

rāmaṁ lakṣmaṇapūrvajaṁ raghuvaraṁ sītāpatiṁ sundaraṁ
kākutsthaṁ karuṇārṇavaṁ guṇanidhiṁ viprapriyaṁ dhārmikaṁ//
rājendraṁ satyasandhaṁ daśarathanayaṁ śyāmalaṁ śāntamūrtiṁ
vande lokābhirāmaṁ raghukulatilakaṁ rāghavaṁ rāvaṇāriṁ//26//

26. I pray, honour and pay my obeisance to Lord Ram who is elder to Laxman, is the best and most exalted in the clan of Raghu, is the Lord of Sita, is most beautiful and charming, is the son of the clan of king Kukutasta of the Sun-dynasty, is an ocean of mercy, compassion and kindness, is a treasury of virtues, noble characters and qualities, is a devotee of (or one who adores or respects Brahmins [learned class of people], is most righteous and noble, is a King among kings, is most steadfast in

truthfulness, is the son of Dasrath, is an image of peace and bliss, is of dark complexion, is (the most) beautiful (charming, lovable, great; possessing magnificent characters and auspicious virtues), in all the worlds (i.e. in the entire creation), is like a Tilak (i.e. is foremost, supreme and most exalted) in the dynasty of king of Raghu, is called Raghav (i.e. one who is born in Raghu's dynasty), and is the slayer of Ravana (the ten-headed demon king of Lanka) (26).

रामाय रामभद्राय रामचन्द्राय वेधसे ।
रघुनाथाय नाथाय सीतायाः पतये नमः ।।27 ।।

rāmāya rāmabhadrāya rāmacandrāya vedhase/
raghunāthāya nāthāya sītāyāḥ pataye namaḥ//27//

27. ‘Ram, Rambhadra (i.e. the noble, righteous, gentle, virtuous Ram), Ramchandra (i.e. Ram who is as beautiful, comforting and soothing as the moon), who is the manifestation of the creator himself, who is the Lord of Raghu's clan, who is the Lord himself, and who is the Lord (husband) of Sita’—I bow my head reverentially to him (27).

श्रीराम राम रघुनन्दन राम राम
श्रीराम राम भरताग्रज राम राम ।
श्रीराम राम रणकर्कश राम राम
श्रीराम राम शरणं भव राम राम ।।28 ।।

śrīrāma rāma raghunandana rāma rāma
śrīrāma rāma bharatāgraja rāma rāma/
śrīrāma rāma raṇakarkaśa rāma rāma
śrīrāma rāma śaraṇaṁ bhava rāma rāma//28//

28. Oh Lord Sri Ram, the son of Raghu's clan! Oh Lord Sri Ram, the elder brother of Bharat! Oh Lord Sri Ram, the most valiant, brave, courageous, steadfast and patient in the battle-field (or in war)! Please be my shelter and refuge (i.e. be the Lord who gives me solace, succour, protection and patronage) (28).

श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ मनसा स्मरामि
श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ वचसा गृणामि ।
श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ शिरसा नमामि
श्रीरामचन्द्रचरणौ शरणं प्रपद्ये ।।29 ।।

śrīrāmacandracaraṇau manasā smarāmi
śrīrāmacandracaraṇau vacasā gṛṇāmi/
śrīrāmacandracaraṇau śirasā namāmi
śrīrāmacandracaraṇau śaraṇaṁ prapadye//29//

29. I remember the holy feet of Lord Sri Ramchandra with sincerity (i.e. with my mind, intellect and heart); chant aloud about the (glories, fames, virtues and potential powers of) holy feet of Lord Sri Ram, bow my head to pay obeisance at the (holy) feet of Lord Sri Ram, and take shelter, protection and/or refuge of the (holy) feet of Lord Sri Ram (29).

माता रामो मत्पिता रामचन्द्रः
स्वामी रामो मत्सखा रामचन्द्रः ।
सर्वस्वं मे रामचन्द्रो दयालु-
नान्यं जाने नैव जाने न जाने ॥30॥

mātā rāmo matpitā rāmacandraḥ
svāmī rāmo matsakhā rāmacandraḥ/
sarvasvaṁ me rāmacandro dayālu-
rnānyaṁ jāne naiva jāne na jāne//30//

30. Lord Sri Ram is my mother, Lord Sri Ram is my father, Lord Sri Ram is my Lord, and Lord Sri Ram is my friend and companion. The merciful, compassionate and kind Lord Sri Ram is all-in-all (everything, everyone) for me; I do not know (or recognise) any one except him—not at all, for sure! (30).

दक्षिणे लक्ष्मणो यस्य वामे च जनकात्मजा ।
पुरतो मारुतिर्यस्य तं वन्दे रघुनन्दनम् ॥31॥

dakṣiṇe lakṣmaṇo yasya vāme ca janakātmajā/
purato mārutirasya taṁ vande raghunandanam//31//

31. I pay my obeisance to Raghunandan (literally meaning ‘the great son of the Raghu dynasty; Lord Sri Ram) who has Laxman (his younger brother) on his right, daughter of Janak (Sita, his divine consort) on his left, and the son of Wind-God (Hanuman) in the front (31).

लोकाभिरामं रणरङ्गधीरं
राजीवनेत्रं रघुवंशनाथम् ।
कारुण्यरूपं करुणाकरं तं
श्रीरामचन्द्रं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥32॥

lokābhirāmaṁ raṇaraṅgadhīraṁ
rājīvanetraṁ raghuvanśanātham/
kāruṇyarūpaṁ karuṇākaraṁ taṁ
śrīrāmacandraṁ śaraṇaṁ prapadye//32//

32. He is the most beautiful and charming in the whole world (i.e. the entire creation), is the most courageous, patient, brave and valiant as well as an expert in the art of warfare, is lotus-eyed, is the leader of the clan of Raghu, is an embodiment and treasury of mercy, compassion and kindness—I take refuge with such a Lord Sri Ram (32).

मनोजवं मारुततुल्यवेगं
जितेन्द्रियं बुद्धिमतां वरिष्ठम् ।
वातात्मजं वानरयूथमुख्यं
श्रीरामदुतं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥33॥

manojavaṁ mārutatulyavegaṁ
jitendriyaṁ buddhimatāṁ varīṣṭham/
vātātmajaṁ vānarayūthamukhyaṁ
śrīrāmadutaṁ śaraṇaṁ prapadye//33//

33. [This verse is dedicated to Hanuman, the wisest, and the most faithful and devoted follower of Lord Ram.]

He, whose speed (of motion) is as swift and agile as the mind and whose force is as fierce as the wind, who is most restrained (i.e. as full control over his sense organs) and is the most exalted among the wise ones—I take shelter/refuge with that son of the Wind-God who is the most exalted amongst the monkeys, and is the messenger of Lord Sri Ram (33).

कूजन्तं रामरामेति मधुरं मधुराक्षरम् ।
आरुह्य कविताशाखां वन्दे वाल्मीकिकोकिलम् ॥34॥

kūjantaṁ rāmarāmeti madhuraṁ madhurākṣaram/
āruhya kavitaśākhāṁ vande vālmīkikokilam//34//

34. [This verse is dedicated in the honour of sage Valmiki who was the first to write the holy story of Lord Ram that is known worldwide as the ‘Ramayana’.]

I pay my obeisance to and honour the cuckoo representing sage Valmiki, which sits on a branch of a tree representing poetry (i.e. the epic Ramayan) and chants sweetly and most pleasantly the holy name of Lord Sri Ram which has two sweet letters (RA and MA) (34).

आपदामपहर्तारं दातारं सर्वसम्पदाम् ।
लोकाभिरामं श्रीरामं भूयो भूयो नमाम्यहम् ॥35॥

āpadāmapahartāraṁ dātāraṁ sarvasampadām/
lokābhirāmaṁ śrīrāmaṁ bhūyo bhūyo namāmyaham//35//

35. The one who steals (i.e. dispels, eliminates, removes or helps us to overcome or surmount) all troubles, difficulties, hurdles, problems and obstacles, is a bestower of all types of prosperities and wealth (i.e. happiness and well-beings), and who is the most beautiful and charming in the whole world—I again and again (repeatedly) bow my head to such a Lord Sri Ram (35).

भर्जनं भवबीजानामर्जनं सुखसम्पदाम् ।
तर्जनं यमदूतानां रामरामेति गर्जनम् ।।36।।

bharjanam bhavabijānāmarjanam sukhasampadām/
tarjanam yamadūtānām rāmarāmeti garjanam//36//

36. ‘Ram-Ram’—chanting of these words (or Mantras) aloud (in a resounding voice) is able to (i.e. results in; is potent enough to) roast all the ‘seeds’ of this world (i.e. all the roots and causes of evils, vices and sins, of troubles, torments, miseries, agonies, anguish and sorrows, of delusions, attachments, infatuations and indulgences, of greed, avarice, lust and passion, of all deeds and actions that pulls a soul again and again into the quagmire or whirlpool of this mundane, delusionary world consisting of life and death and re-birth), is the bestower of (or, which enables us to achieve) all possible comforts, prosperities, wealth and welfares, and instills fear in (the heart of) the messengers of Death (so that they desist from tormenting us at the time of death i.e. we die peacefully) (36).

रामो राजमणिः सदा विजयते रामं रमेशं भजे
रामेणाभिहता निशाचरचमू रामाय तस्मै नमः ।।
रामान्नास्ति परायणं परतरं रामस्य दासोऽस्म्यहं
रामे चित्तलयः सदा भवतु मे भो राम मामुद्धर ।।37।।

rāmo rājamaṇiḥ sadā vijayate rāmaṁ rameśaṁ bhaje
rāmeṇābhihatā niśācaracamū rāmāya tasmai namaḥ//
rāmānnāsti parāyaṇaṁ parataraṁ rāmasya dāsosmyaham
rāme cittalayaḥ sadā bhavatu me bho rāma māmuddhara//37//

37. Lord Sri Ram—who is the best and most exalted among kings—is always victorious. I worship, have devotion for and adore Lord Sri Ram who is the husband of Laxmi (i.e. another form of Lord Vishnu, the sustainer of the universe). I bow my head in reverence (to pay obeisance) to Lord Sri Ram who crushed the whole army of demons. There is no greater shelter (or refuge) than Lord Sri Ram. I am a humble follower (servant) of that (i.e. such a) Lord Sri Ram. Let my mind and intellect be always engrossed and submerged in the thoughts of Lord Sri Ram (i.e. let me think of nothing else except Lord Ram). Oh Lord Sri Ram! Please give me liberation (from this cycle of birth and death) and salvation (to my soul) (37).

राम रामेति रामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे ।
सहस्रनाम तत्तुल्यं रामनाम वरानने ।।38।।

rāma rāmeti rāmeti rame rāme manorame/
 sahaṭṭanāma tattulyaṁ rāmanāma varānane//38//

38. [Lord Shiva told Parvati—] 'Oh Dear! My Mana (mind, sub-conscious and heart; my total inner-being) constantly remains submerged and engrossed in remembering and adoring the most holy, divine, pleasant, charming and spiritually elevating name of Lord Sri Ram. I live in it; I meditate upon it; I contemplate on it; I think, hear, talk and discuss of nothing else except Lord Ram's holy name 'RAM'. It is my life, and the essence of my whole existence and being.

This single name 'RAM' of Lord Ram is equivalent to thousands of holy names of the Supreme Lord, and is the most exalted and respected amongst them all. [The single word Mantra 'Ram' is equivalent to repeating one thousand names of Lord Vishnu, or for that matter, any other name or Mantra.] (38). '

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Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

Chapter 6

Lord Ram's Mantras appearing in the 'Upanishads'

In this Chapter we shall read the holy divine hymns of Lord Ram as they appear in the sacred Upanishads as follows:

- (6.1) Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1 to 4/47
- (6.2) Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 43-63
- (6.3) Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 7:
- (6.4) Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-106
- (6.5) Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 1
- (6.6) Kali Santaran Upanishad, verse no. 2

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(6.1) Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1 to 4/47

The Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad belongs to the Atharva Veda tradition. We read about Lord Ram's holy Mantras in its Canto 5, verse nos. 4/1 to 4/47 as follows:--

४/१. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवानद्वैतपरमानन्दात्मा यत्परं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः
।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavānadvaitaparamānandātmā,
yatparam̐ brahma bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/1//

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे अद्वितीय परमानन्द स्वरूप आत्मा हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (१)।

[नोट : भगवान् शब्द का अर्थ— जिसमें सम्पूर्ण ऐश्वर्य, सम्पूर्ण धर्म, सम्पूर्ण यश, सम्पूर्ण श्री, सम्पूर्ण ज्ञान और सम्पूर्ण वैराग्य— यह छः हों उसे भगवान् कहा जाता है।]

4/1. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan'¹ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is 'Advaitya'—i.e. he is non-dual, without a parallel, is peerless and unique.

He is the 'Atma' (or soul; the pure consciousness) that is an embodiment or a fount of 'Param Anand'—i.e. he is the personified form of the eternal and ethereal cosmic Consciousness that is an image of supreme, pure and absolute bliss, beatitude and felicity.

He is the most majestic, exalted, sublime and supreme transcendental Brahm personified. The three Lokas called Bhu (भू), Bhuvaha (भुवः) and Swaha (स्वः)² are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/1).

[¹The word 'Bhagwan' has two parts— 'Bhag' and 'wan'. The 2nd part 'wan' means 'one who possesses'. The 1st part 'Bhag' refers to the following six qualities or virtues in their entirety—(1) 'Aishwarya' of all sorts—i.e. someone who has all majesty, powers, wealth, fortune, opulence, flourish, supremacy, sway, dominance, glory, grandeur, omnipotence and other glorious virtues, (2) 'Dharma'—i.e. to have the virtues of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity, propriety, virtuous and noble conduct and thought, (3) 'Yash'—i.e. the fame, glory, majesty and renown that comes with possessing noble and virtues qualities, (4) 'Sree'—i.e. wealth, prosperity, pomp and circumstance, prestige, splendour, glory and honour, and all other factors associated with those qualities mentioned in serial no. 1-3 above, (5) 'Gyan'—i.e. comprehensive knowledge, erudition, wisdom, skills, expertise and enlightenment, and (6) complete 'Vairagya'—i.e. full and sincere renunciation, detachment and dispassion towards this world and its material sense objects as well as towards this body and its desires for gratification'.

Hence, anyone who is endowed with the above six qualities is called a 'Bhagwan'.

Conventionally, the word is used as a synonym for the words 'Lord, God, Supreme Being', and is used for someone who is glorious, divine, holy, majestic, honoured and revered.

²The three worlds represented by the three cryptic words are 'Bhu' representing the earth, 'Bhuvaha' representing the sky above the earth, and 'Swaha' representing the heavens. These representative words and their respective worlds were created by the creator Brahma at the beginning of creation.]

४/२. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्चाखण्डैकरसात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaścākhaṇḍaikaarasātmā bhūrbhuvah
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/2 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे अखण्ड स्वरूप परमात्मा हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२)।

4/2. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is the supreme Atma or Soul (the pure cosmic Consciousness) which is eternal, uniform, universal, indivisible and immutable; it is a single entity that cannot be partitioned, fractioned and fractured in any way whatsoever.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/2).

४/३. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च ब्रह्मानन्दामृतं भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaśca brahmānandāmṛtam bhūrbhuvah
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/3 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे आनन्दमय अमृतमय ब्रह्मानन्द स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३)।

4/3. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is a personified form of the Amrit (the ambrosia or elixir) of supreme and undiluted Anand (bliss, happiness, ecstasy, beatitude and felicity) that is associated with Brahm and Brahm-realisation.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/3).

४/४. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यस्तारकं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yasttārakaṁ brahma bhūrbhuvah
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/4 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे तारक ब्रह्म हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (४)।

4/4. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

He is the Tarak Brahman—i.e. he is the supreme Lord who can provide the creature with liberation and deliverance from this world and its never ending miseries and the cycle of birth and death. He is the supreme Lord who can provide the soul of the creature with emancipation and salvation.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/4).

४/५. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यो ब्रह्मा विष्णुर्गणेश्वरो यः सर्वदेवात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yō brahmā viṣṇurmaheśvaro yah
sarvadevātmā bhūrbhuvah svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/5 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे ब्रह्मा, विष्णु और शिव हैं। वे सर्वदेवमय परमात्मा हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (५)।

4/5. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

He is the one who has revealed himself as the Trinity Gods known as Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer) and Shiva (the concluder). [This is obviously true as these three Gods of the Trinity represent the Supreme Being performing three functions of creation, and Lord Ram is that Supreme Being.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/5).

४/६. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये सर्वे वेदाः साङ्गाः सशाखाः सपुराणा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān ye sarve vedāḥ sāṅgāḥ saśākhāḥ
sapurāṇāḥ bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/6 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे अंगों सहित सम्पूर्ण वेद, उनकी शाखाएं, पुराण तथा भू आदि जो तीनों लोक हैं उन सबके रूप में प्रतिष्ठित हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों भू आदि जो तीनों लोक हैं उन सबके रूप में प्रतिष्ठित हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (६)।

4/6. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

All the Vedas, their branches, all the Purans and other scriptures are nothing but the Lord revealed in their forms.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/6).

४/७. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यो जीवात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yo jīvātmā bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/7 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे जीवात्मा स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (७)।

4/7. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is the Lord who has revealed himself as the Jivatma or the living being. [The word 'Jivatma or Jiva Atma' refers to the living being. Jivatma is the cosmic consciousness that comes to live in a gross body, or assumes a form of a gross body. Since this gross body harbours the Atma or the pure cosmic consciousness inside it, it begins to show all the signs of life and vitality, hence called a 'Jiva'—i.e. a living being. The otherwise inane and lifeless gross body has now become alive and active because of the presence of the Atma inside it, thereby giving it the unique honour of being a 'Jiva Atma'. Since the Atma is a universal and unchanging entity that is Advaitya or non-dual by nature, and it is another name for the cosmic Consciousness known as Brahm that has manifested as Lord Ram, it follows that the Jiva Atma is also the Lord in this form.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/7).

४/८. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यः सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaḥ sarvabhūtāntarātmā bhūrbhuvāḥ
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/8 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे सम्पूर्ण प्राणियों एवं भूतों की अन्तात्मा हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (८)।

4/8. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

He is the Lord who resides in the bosom of all living beings as their Atma, the pure conscious soul, the cosmic Consciousness that resides in the subtle heart or the inner-self as the 'true identity or the true self' of the creature.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/8).

४/९. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये देवासुरमनुष्यादिभावा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān ye devāsuraṃmanuṣyādibhāvāḥ
bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 9 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे देवता, असुर और मनुष्य आदि जातियों के रूप में विराजमान हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (९)।

4/9. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

All the Gods, the non-Gods called the Asurs, and the Humans—indeed, all of them are the same Lord Ram (or the supreme Brahm) revealed in their forms.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/9).

४/१०. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये मत्स्यकूर्माद्यवतारा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān ye matsyakūrmādyavatārā bhūrbhuvāḥ
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/10 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। उन्होंने मत्स्य, कच्छप आदि अवतार लिये थे। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (१०)।

4/10. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram (in his cosmic form as Vishnu) who had revealed himself as incarnations of Lord Matsya¹ (the Fish incarnation of Vishnu) and Kurma² (the Tortoise incarnation of Vishnu).

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/10).

[¹‘Matsya Avtaar’ or the Fish incarnation of Lord Vishnu—In this incarnation as a Fish or Matsya, which is the first of ten divine incarnations of Vishnu, the Lord is said to have saved Manu, the progenitor of mankind, and the Saptarishis (the seven mental sons of the creator Brahma) along with their wives during the dooms-day deluge. They were made to board a boat which was pulled by this Fish and saved from being drowned. They re-populated the world later on. It is a story identical to the Biblical story of the Noah’s Arc.

²‘Kurma Avtaar’ or the Tortoise incarnation of Lord Vishnu—Kurma or Tortoise incarnation of Vishnu—It is the second incarnation of Vishnu. The Lord had supported the legendary Mountain called Mandara which had started sinking during the churning of the ocean by the Gods and the Demons in search of Amrit, the elixir of eternal and life.]

४/११. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च प्राणो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaśca prāṇo bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/11 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे (जीव के) प्राण स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (११)।

4/11. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the ‘Pran’ or the vital life sustaining forces of creation. [The word ‘Pran’ literally means ‘life and consciousness’. The word is used to mean the vital winds in conventional terms of Yoga and Upanishads because the vital winds are said to regulate all the functions of the creature’s body. No living being can survive without the presence of air in this world.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/11).

४/१२. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् योऽन्तःकरणचतुष्टयात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yo’ntaḥkaraṇacatuṣṭayātmā bhūrbhuvāḥ
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/12 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे मन, बुद्धि, चित्त, अहंकार— इन चार प्रकार के अन्तःकरणों में स्थित चेतन आत्मा हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (१२)।

4/12. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the four aspects of the inner-self of all living beings, called the 'Antahakaran Chatusthaaye'. [The 'Anthakaran' is the inner self of the creature. It forms his subtle body. It has the following four components—Mana (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (the faculty of concentration, paying attention and memory; knowledge and sub-conscious), Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance) and their attendant Vrittis (inherent character, traits, habits, inclinations and temperaments of a creature based on these basic components of the subtle body). That is, the basic nature of a person and the way he would react to a given circumstance, the way he would deal, behave and interact with the world, the way he would interpret things, the way he thinks, the things that would appeal to him and the things he would abhor, etc.—that is, the overall personality of the creature, all depends upon the mental setup tinged with the fundamental character traits that are firmly ingrained in him.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/12).

४/१३. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च यमो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaśca yamo bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/13 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे यम आदि स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (१३)।

4/13. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Yam'. [The word 'Yam' has three connotations—(i) Yam is the God of death¹, and hence Lord Ram is the one who

brings about the conclusion of creation in the form of Yam. (ii) Yam is the God of Dharma—the deity who is responsible for implementation of the tenets of Dharma, or the eclectic principles of auspiciousness, righteousness, probity and propriety as well as nobility in thought and conduct. Hence, Lord Ram ensures that the tenets of Dharma are upheld in this creation. (iii) Yam also means self restraint and control over the sense organs. Hence, Lord Ram exemplifies these grand virtues of creation.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/13).

[¹Yam as God of death and the deity responsible for upkeep of Dharma is the one who judges the creature for his deeds during his life and ascertains the reward or punishment that he deserves for them; he is therefore also called Dharma-Raj or the king who is responsible for ensuring that the grand and eclectic principles of Dharma are implemented in full in this world. If any creature violates its principles then Yam punishes him by condemning him to suffer in hell.

Yam God is extensively covered in the 1st and 10th Mandals of the Rig Veda. Sukta 10 of the tenth Mandal is totally devoted to him. Yam personifies the concept of death and life after death. As opposed to Niriti who is also the God related to death, Yam deals with giving justice to the dead person depending upon his deeds that he has done during his lifetime. Therefore, he is also called the patron God of Dharma, because he gives the dead person an abode in the heaven for his righteous and noble life, whereas Niriti is the patron God of death and destruction due to sins and evil way of life. According to legends, Yam's sister is Yami. His father is named Vivaswat or Vivaswaan, and he is also called 'Yam Vaivaswat' (Rig Veda, 10/14/5). His mother's name is Saranyu (Rig Veda, 10/17/1-2). He is regarded the patron God of those who are dying. He resides in the outer heaven. Out of the 3 Lokas (mythological worlds), the first two, i.e. 'Bhu' (earth; the terrestrial) and 'Bhuvaha' (the sky just above the surface of the earth; the space of the solar system) is the realm of Savita (the God who is treated as synonymous of Sun), while the third world, the 'Swaha' representing the heaven, is the abode of Yam (Rig Veda, 10/35/6). In some places he is also regarded as the son of a Gandharva and a marine beauty (Rig Veda, 10/10/4).]

४/१४. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्चान्तको भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaścāntako bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/14 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे 'अन्तक' (शिव) स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (१४)।

4/14. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

Lord Ram is the one who concludes this creation or brings it to an end, and is the only one who lasts even after the creation is concluded. [In other words, (i) Lord Ram is Lord Shiva personified, or Lord Shiva is none but Lord Ram in his role as the concluder of creation, and (ii) Lord Ram is the cosmic Consciousness or the supreme Brahm who is the only entity that survives the conclusion of creation, and from whom the next phase of creation starts. This is because Lord Ram as Brahm is infinite, eternal and imperishable cosmic Consciousness.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/14).

४/१५. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च मृत्यु भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaśca mṛtyu bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/15 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे मृत्यु स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (१५)।

4/15. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the Mṛityu or death¹. [In other words, the God of Death is a form that Lord Ram takes to bring about the conclusion of creation. That is why it has been said in the scriptures that a wise and enlightened man does not fear from death as he has developed a sufficiently holistic view of life in which he sees the Lord everywhere in every phase of creation—he sees his Lord equally in life as well as in death.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/15).

[¹Lord Ram is the sustainer as well as the concluder of the creation. There is no perplexity in it because as Brahm personified, the Lord is the beginning and the end of all that exists. Besides this point, Lord Ram has to get rid of evil and corrupt forces of creation so that righteousness and auspiciousness can prevail. Therefore, he is personified death for those who are pervert and sinful.]

४/१६. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्चामृतं भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaścāmṛtam bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/16 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे अमृत स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (१६)।

4/16. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Amrit' or the ambrosia or elixir of life. He is the nectar of life, the vital force of life, the essence of life, the eternal source of life.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/16).

४/१७. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यानि पञ्चमहाभूतानि भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yāni pañcamahābhūtāni bhūrbhuvāḥ
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/17 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे पञ्चमहाभूत (पृथ्वी, जल, अग्नि, वायु, आकाश) स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (१७)।

4/17. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Panch Maha-Bhuts', or the five principal elements of creation. [In other words, the five elements that constitute the basic backbone of creation have their value and importance because they are one of the many forms of the Supreme Being known as Ram. Or, Lord Ram has assumed five forms called the 'Panch Bhuts' in order to carry out different functions of this creation. The Panch Maha-bhuts are the sky or space, air or wind, fire or energy,

water or elixir of life, and earth upon which the entire edifice of creation rests. The difference between ‘Five Bhuts’ and ‘Five Maha Bhuts’ is that the former refers to the above five elements at the microcosmic level of creation dealing with the individual creature, while the latter term is applied to the same elements when they are considered in their macrocosmic form.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/17).

४/१८. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यः स्थावरजङ्गमात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaḥ sthāvarajaṅgamātmā bhūrbhuvah
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/18 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे स्थावर—जड़मरूपी संसार की आत्मा हैं। (यानि कि चराचर जगत स्वरूप हैं।) जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (१८)।

4/18. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the entire creation—both in its immobile form as well as in its mobile form. [The word ‘Sthaawar’ refers to something that does not move or show apparent signs of life—such as members of the plant kingdom and rocks, mountains etc., while the word ‘Jangam’ means those who are mobile and exhibit clear signs of life—such as the members of the animal kingdom. In other words, every single unit of creation is a form of the supreme Brahm who is known by another name as Ram.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/18).

४/१९. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये च पञ्चाग्नयो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān ye ca pañcāgnayo bhūrbhuvah svastasmai
vai namo namaḥ // 4/19 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे आहवनीय आदि पाँच अग्नि स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (१९)।

[नोट : अग्नि के पाँच रूप निम्न हैं— गार्हपत्य, आहवनीय, दक्षिणाग्नि, सभ्य एवं आवसथ्य। अथवा सूर्य, विजली, पृथ्वी की अग्नि, गृहपति एवं पुरोहित।]

4/19. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Panch Agnis'¹, the five divine forms of the sacred fire.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/19).

[¹The five divine fires are the following—Garhyapatya': the fire of the household hearth, (b) 'Dakshinagni': the fire used as a witness to making charities or any other religious festivity, (c) 'Ahavaniya': the fire to invoke the Gods during a ritualistic sacrifice, (d) 'Sabhya': the fire of the Vedic period which was continuously lit, and (e) 'Awasathya': the fire of the later Smriti period.

The Garhyapatya fire—This is the householder's fire. A householder has land and farm representing 'earth' in which he grows food. This food is grown with the help of the light of the Sun, and it is cooked in the fire of the fire place in the house. Hence, the Garhyapatya fire, or the householder's fire, is intrinsically present and is implied in these four entities. It is an integral part of these four. The earth has the 'fire element' because without heat and warmth, no seed would germinate and no life can survive on this earth. The food has fire present inherently in it because it is the energy inherent in food which helps to energise the creature that eats it. The presence of heat in the sun does not need to be explained because it is very evident.

The fire was the central piece of all religious life in early times of the Vedic period when a fire sacrifice was deemed to be the best religious activity that a righteous man can expect to do. In this context, the Garhyapatya fire is the main fire lit during such formal fire sacrifices. The fire pit was either square-shaped or rounded. In the context of the fire sacrifice, it was used for the purpose of daily rituals, cooking or warming the offerings, heating of the vessels, to perform circumambulation, to act as a main cauldron or reservoir of the sacred fire which was to be kept perpetually burning throughout the life of the householder once it was lit.

The Dakshinagni fire—This fire is a witness to making of charities when some water is poured as libation to the Gods. It signifies that the Gods are offered water to drink. To give water to the thirsty is the greatest form of charity. Therefore, this fire is symbolically present in water, and when it is poured, it signifies that the heat produced by sins committed by the person has been doused. Charities and donations make a man famous and renowned, hence the allusion to directions of the earth. His glory shines like the bright moon and he is called a star among human beings. He is

the most exalted amongst his peers and compatriots even as the moon is most prominent amongst the stars in the sky.

Like in the case of the Garhyapatya fire, the fire that was lit in the main sacrificial shed or site just near the main fire pit but to the south of it and where donations and charities were made was called Dakshinagni fire. The fire pit for this fire was semi-circular or bow-shaped.

The Ahawaniya fire—This fire is lit to invoke the Gods, and the Gods live in the heaven; hence the reference to the sky, heavens and electric. Since Pran is the best form of the vital winds, the allusion means that the Gods are the most exalted forms that exist in creation. The ‘electric’ is a metaphor for immense strength, potent and power, which of course the fire possesses. This inherent quality of Electric that it possesses most stupendous powers and strength is likened to the presence of Brahm in it even as the great power and strength present in a man is due to the Atma or Pran present in him. Even as a man is useless without the presence of Pran in him, the Electric would lose its importance if there was no Brahm present in it which gives it its punch and strength.

According to Vedic tradition, the invitational fire, the Ahawaniya fire that is lit to invite or invoke the Gods, is started from a spark brought from the Garhyapatya fire of the patron who does the fire sacrifice or on whose behalf it is being done. If such a fire is not available with him, then it is brought from some other person’s house who worships the sacred fire on a daily basis. The Dakshinagni is then lit to bear witness to the charities made during the fire sacrifice.

The following are also regarded as the five fires— (i) The Sun, (ii) The Lightning, (iii) The Terrestrial fire, (iv) The Master or Lord of the household, and (v) The Chief Priest.

Scriptures ordain that a learned person should worship the fire element by doing five types of sacrifices in his life. These are called the Panch Maha Yagya (the five great sacrifices). They are the following—(1) Bhut Yagya refers to taking care of other creatures in creation, such as feeding animals and providing for their protection and shelter. (2) Manushya Yagya refers to doing the same thing for fellow human beings as done for animals and other creatures of this creation. (3) Pitri Yagya refers to offering oblations to dead ancestors and doing religious activities for the peace of their souls. (4) Dev Yagya refers to the performance of fire sacrifices in which offerings are given to the sacred fire which sustain the Gods and are done to honour them. (5) And Brahm Yagya refers to the study of the Vedas and other scriptures that enlighten the man about the ultimate Truth known as Brahm. These five sacrifices have been described in Ashramo-panishad, verse no. 3.

According to the Pran Agnihotra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 12, the five holy fires are the following—Pran or breath (because it keep the body warm and alive), Ahawaniya, Dakshinagni, Garhapatya, and Sarwa-Praaschitya or the fire of repentance, expiation and penance’.

According to the Pran Agnihotra Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 19, there are five fires in the body. They are—(i) Suryaagni also known as Darshanaagni, (ii) Ahawaniya Agni, (iii) Sharir Agni, (iv) Dakshinaagni, and (v) Koshtagni or Kosta Agni which is akin to the Garhyapatya Agni.

The Yogshikha Upanishad, Canto 5, verse nos. 29-32 of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes the following 5 fires—Kalagni, Samulaagni, Vadaagni, Electric (lightening) and Sun (the cosmic cauldron of fire).]

४/२०. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् याः सप्तव्याहृतयो भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yāḥ sapta mahāvyaḥṛtayaḥ bhūrbhuvah
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/20 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे भूः आदि सात महाव्याहृतियाँ स्वरूप हैं। (ये निम्न हैं— भूः, भुवः, स्वः, महः, जनः, तपः, सत्यमः)। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२०)।

4/20. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Sapta Maha Vyāhritis'¹, the five divine forms of subtle life. [The Vyāhritis were the first esoteric words uttered by Brahma, the creator, at the time of creation, and each of them metamorphosed as a world of its own.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/20).

[¹The 'Vyāhritis' (vyāhṛti) are the primary root words pronounced by the creator Brahma at the time of the beginning of creation and from which formed the nucleus around which the seven worlds formed. In other words, the rest of the creation was revealed from these primary sounds created by Brahma.

The seven 'Vyāhritis' are the words—(1) Bhu, (2) Bhuvaha, (3) Swaha, (4) Maha, (5) Janaha, (6) Tapaha, and (7) Satyam. 'Bhu' was the nucleus for earth, 'Bhuvaha' for the sky above the earth, 'Swaha' for the space beyond the earth's atmosphere and is generally meant for the heavens, 'Maha' stands for the greater heavens beyond the solar system, called the Maha-Loka where enlightened sages and seers are supposed to dwell (as opposed to earth where ordinary creatures including subterranean creatures would finally take up residence), 'Tapaha' was the place where exalted ascetics would do penances and austerities, and 'Satyam' was the truthful and ultimate abode where the ultimate and irrefutable supreme truthful entity which is the only Authority in creation resides.

According to Sankhya Shastra and the Purans, Brahma, who is known as 'Swayambhu' (self-created and self-begotten in the sense that he had no father or ancestor from whom he descended) created seven elements called 'Vyāhriti', viz. Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha, Mahaha, Janaha, Tapaha and Satyam respectively which constitute the fundamental elements which formed the gross body of the creation as its core building blocks at the macro level. Encircling this core is the rounded globe called 'earth' which is surrounded by concentric circles constituting of 'water', 'energy' called 'Tej', 'wind or air', 'sky or space', the notions that are described as 'pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness and vanity' collectively called 'Ahankar', and the

notions of ‘importance, majesty, grandeur, magnificence and lordliness’ called collectively as ‘Mahattatva’. Each of them was ten times larger than its preceding layer or circle.

The seven Vyahritis and the worlds they represent are the following—(a) ‘Bhu’ represents this world (earth), fire, Rig Veda and Pran (life giving breath); (b) ‘Bhuvaha’ represents the sky called Antariksha, wind or air, Sam Vedas and Apaana wind (i.e. the wind which passes down the intestines and helps in digestion and excretion); (c) ‘Swaha’ represents Dukoka (the heavens), Aditya (the celestial sun), Yajur Veda and Vyan (the wind that prevails throughout the body); (d) ‘Maha’ represents Aditya (the Sun God), Chandrama (the Moon God), Brahm (the supreme transcendental Being who has no specific attributes) and Anna (food which sustains life in this creation); (e) ‘Janaha’ represents the world inhabited by mortal creatures such as the life on earth; (f) ‘Tapaha’ represents the world where great ascetics and hermits live to do severe penances and austerities, and therefore it is most auspicious and holy and marked by an effulgence of divine energy and splendour; and (g) ‘Satyam’ representing that truthful abode where the supreme transcendental Brahm lives; it is the ultimate destination of all spiritual pursuits, and is marked by eternal beatitude and felicity.

The Taittiriyo-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Valli 1, Anuvak 5 describes these Vyahritis. It however focuses on four Vyahritis only, i.e. Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha and Maha. In this verse, the different ‘Vyahritis’ are being worshipped as manifestations of the supreme transcendental Brahm.]

४/२१. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या विद्या भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yā vidyā bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/21 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे विद्या स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२१)।

4/21. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as glorious virtue known as ‘Vidya’— i.e. knowledge in all its forms. [Knowledge is the most important component of creation as even the basic functions of life depend upon knowledge.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/21).

४/२२. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या सरस्वती भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yā sarasvatī bhūrbhuvaḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/22 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे सरस्वती के रूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२२)।

4/22. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as ‘Saraswati’¹, the Goddess of knowledge, erudition, sagacity, skills and wisdom as well as the faculty of speech. [In other words, the sublime and grand virtues that are represented by this goddess are nothing but one of the numerous majestic and eclectic virtues of Lord Ram revealed in that divine form.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/22).

[¹Saraswati—In the form of a goddess known as Saraswati who personifies the virtues of learning, wisdom, erudition, knowledge, expertise and skills of all kinds as well as all kinds of arts, crafts and sciences and all other bodies of knowledge that exist in this creation, she appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/164/49, and subsequently in Rig Veda, 6/61/1-14, 7/95/1-2, 4-6, and 7/96/1-3. The Goddess is also honoured in other Vedas as follows—in Sam Veda, 1461, in Yajur Veda, 20/84 and 34/41, and in Atharva Veda, 6/94, 18/1/42-43. The faculty of speech called Vak has been personified as a goddess. She is related to Brihaspati, the patron God of speech and wisdom (Rig Veda, 10/71/1). She is the patron goddess of speech because all forms of knowledge need speech and the ability to express and explain things properly to be perpetrated and become useful for this creation. Suppose there was no speech, then the knowledge would not have been disseminated so widely. All the Vedas are said to be created by her; hence she is regarded as the mother of the Vedas (Gayatri Rahasyopanishad, 4/5/9-10).

According to the Purans, she is the Shakti or dynamic power of the creator Brahma because any specialised process would require technical skills, expertise and relevant knowledge in order to complete it successfully—especially the one as technical and complicated as the one related to the creation of a vast and infinitely complex structure known as the universe that is continuously evolving and ever changing in nature, in which no two units are alike, and which has defied explanation and full understanding even at the hands of the highest of intelligent brains. No success in any auspicious endeavour is possible without intelligence, wisdom, erudition, relevant knowledge, skills and expertise.

Since Goddess Saraswati embodies these virtues in her self, and since the Vedas are the traditional ancient repositories of all knowledge that was created by Brahma the creator, it is said that the Vedas are personified forms of Saraswati. Again, since the information contained in the timeless Vedas were passed on from generation to generation by the process of teaching and learning which entails the use of speech and skill with language, this Goddess is said to patronize these two—the faculty of speech called Vak, and skills with the language. Learning and teaching also requires intelligence and a properly functioning mind and its sub-conscious, these too were patronized by Saraswati. That is why a person who is highly learned and scholarly, who is wise, intelligent and erudite, is said to be especially blessed by Goddess Saraswati. The Vedas created by Brahma would have been useless had it not been for Saraswati that enabled these Vedas to be revealed, taught and propagated from generation to generation.

Etymologically, ‘Saraswati’ represents a river, and this is how she is represented in the Rig Veda, because the word literally means ‘to flow’. This is a very apt definition for Saraswati because that knowledge which ‘flows and spreads’, which ‘grows and develops’, is good for all and it blooms, while that which is locked in books and shelves of libraries is as good as non-existent, it becomes stagnant and has no practical value and utility. Metaphorically, this ‘flow’ can also represent speech because what we speak also flows forth from our mind and tongue; that is why good orators are said to be making a flowing and flowery speech that springs out from their mouth in a natural flow much like a stream gushing out from a natural spring or flowers that blossom in the spring season on their own.

Since the light of knowledge and wisdom is the anti-thesis of the darkness created by delusions and ignorance, she is iconographically depicted clothed in spotless white—the colour of all-inclusiveness purity and irrefutable immaculacy, of absolute truth and reality, as well as of wisdom, knowledge and light that removes the various shades of darkness representing ignorance and delusions. She sits on a lotus also symbolizing purity and cleanliness.

Her mount or vehicle is the Hans, the Swan, which is itself regarded as a very wise bird. It is believed that it would pick up pearls and leave the rest of the gems aside from a collection of jewels, and drink pure milk and leave its adulterants to symbolise its ability of selecting and accepting the best of what is available. Saraswati sitting on the Hans implies that mere technical knowledge, skill and expertise alone are not enough if it is not complemented with wisdom, insight, erudition and enlightenment. This means a person on whom Saraswati is pleased would use his discretionary intellect and wisdom to select the best option available to him; he would pick out the nuggets of wisdom contained in the vast and voluminous scriptures that are of any spiritual worth for him and accept them in his daily life, leaving aside the rest. The swan moves majestically in a pond of lotus flowers, it lends glory to the pond and the flowers because it is the only living entity in the immobile surroundings. Likewise, a wise and learned man is like a gem in the society.

In mythological lore, a Peacock is also depicted as her vehicle. The peacock is said to be the most beautiful bird with its opened plume of colorful feathers—this symbolises the fact that knowledge can not only bring the best things of the world to the person who has knowledge and expertise on any subject but also to symbolise that it is a person’s degree of mental development and the level of his wisdom, knowledge, erudition and enlightenment that makes him attractive, much respected and honoured rather than the amount of physical wealth he possesses, the strength of his body or its beauty that has any real importance. The peacock in its self is not a beautiful bird; it is

its colourful plume of open feathers that makes it so charming and attractive. So, mere knowledge and intelligence is not as important as their type and the use to which they are put. A man's knowledge can be the cause of ruin and miseries for others, while another man's knowledge can show happiness and peace to the less fortunate ones. Obviously, the latter is revered by the society and the former is loathed.

In iconographic accounts, she is shown as having four hands. The four arms are indicative of her all-inclusiveness, as they stand for the four Vedas as well as the four cardinal points of the directional compass (east, south, west and north). Further, the supreme transcendental cosmic Consciousness known as Brahman is also said to have four Pads or aspects—refer Chandogya Upanishad, Canto 4, Section 5-8 of Sam Veda tradition.

In one version, two of the hands hold a Veena (Indian lute)—one hand holding it, while the other hand strumming its string to indicate that she is eternally singing the hymns of the Vedas, deriving eternal bliss from this singing, and perpetually immersed in contemplation and meditation. The Veena, a musical instrument used to sing melodiously, indicates the ability to be sentimental and emotional on the one hand, and this involves the interaction of the heart because a good singer sings from the heart, and to be intelligent and have a sharp mind which naturally involves the mind and intellect on the other hand, because one has to be an expert in the Vedas and the languages in order to remember the complicated verses and recall them flawlessly while singing. Coordination between the heart and mind is very necessary for singing; singing is not possible if the heart and the mind are not rested, are not at peace with them selves, and not in harmony. The third hand has an Akshamala (prayer rosary). The rosary indicates that in spite of knowing everything and being Brahman personified, she remains constantly engrossed in doing Japa or repeating some divine Mantra herself to teach her followers never to abandon contemplation and meditation as well as the use of divine Mantras. The fourth holds a book symbolizing knowledge in all its forms, in its most visible and tangible form. The book indicates knowledge not only of the scriptures but of all the sciences, arts and crafts taken together.

In another version, she is depicted as holding a rosary, a goad, a loop and a book in her four hands—refer verse no. 38 of the 'Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad'. The symbolism of the goad and the loop is obvious. They indicate the fact that when a man becomes wise he is able to rein in his sense organs by using the loop, and coax himself to follow the correct path by using the goad of wisdom, erudition, knowledge and enlightenment.

Saraswati is considered as the divine consort of Brahman, and hence represents his power of intelligence, wisdom, skill, erudition, expertise and knowledge that enabled Brahman to create the Vedas and the rest of this creation.

An entire Upanishad called Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad belonging to the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is dedicated to her.

In Christianity, Saint Catherine is honoured as the patron saint of learning, students and educational institutions. She is a lady saint like goddess Saraswati and was born in Alexandria in a wealthy family in CE 294. Her name before baptism was Dorothea. She had accepted Christ as her betrothal, and as proof of her devotion for the Lord she was given a ring in her dreams which she found on her fingers when she woke up. But this dedication led to her being martyred during the rule of the Roman Emperor Maximian. It is believed that the angel of God took her body to the foot of Mount Sinai in the Sinai desert. This mountain is where Moses had received the ten Commandments from the Lord. A monastery in her name exists there today.]

४/२३. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या लक्ष्मीः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yā lakṣmīḥ bhūrbhuvah̐ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/23 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे लक्ष्मी स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२३)।

4/23. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as ‘Laxmi¹’, the Goddess of wealth and prosperity. [In other words, it is Lord Ram in his cosmic role as the sustainer of creation assumed the form of goddess known as Laxmi so that he can provide the creature with material comfort and pleasures of life so that the creature is not put to undue inconvenience.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/23).

[¹Laxmi is the Goddess of well being, majesty, wealth and prosperity. She is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu and represents the dynamism of the Lord that helps him to carry out the function of sustenance, development, growth, nourishment and protection of this vast and myriad creation.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 4, verse no. 11 describes the Mantra dedicated to this Goddess. To quote—“OM salutations! The most glorious, majestic, powerful, great and divine Goddess is the Laxmi* of the three worlds called the Bhu Loka (the terrestrial world where mortal creatures live; the earth), the Bhuvaha Loka (which is the lower heaven where the junior Gods and spirits live), and the Swaha Loka (the upper heaven where the Lord of the world Vishnu lives). [*The word Laxmi is used here as an adjective to describe the glorious virtues and majestic qualities that give greatness and supremacy to an entity. It is usually measured in terms of grandeur, magnificence, prosperity, opulence, supernatural powers, sway and authority that such an entity possesses. In materialistic world it is usually a synonym for material wealth, prosperity, opulence and the fame that comes with them. In other words, the divine Goddess Laxmi who is the consort of Lord Vishnu personifies these virtues. Since Lord Vishnu is another name for the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-inclusive form of the supreme Brahm, from whom the entire creation has been born and who completely soaks it like water in sponge, it follows that Laxmi represents the dynamic qualities of Vishnu that helps the Lord to sustain and protect the world.]

Let the great Goddess Maha-Laxmi whose other name is 'Kalkarni' (i.e. the one who actively controls all the deeds and actions of the creature in all phases of time and circumstance) inspire and impel us towards doing auspicious, righteous and noble deeds.'

This Mantra dedicated to the great Goddess Laxmi in the Gayatri Chanda (style of poetical composition) is enunciated in the Yajur Veda, and is therefore called the 'Maha-Laxmi Gayatri Mantra' of the Yajur Veda. It has twenty-four letters or syllables.

Laxmi is the patron goddess of wealth, and she epitomizes all round welfare and well being, not only in material terms but also in spiritual terms for only a well off aspirant who has not to bother about his daily needs can comfortably involve himself in religious activities such as doing fire sacrifices and making charities. If a man is mentally worried about his bread and butter, he would find it hard to concentrate on spiritual pursuits without a sense of guilt of not living up to his responsibilities towards his family, especially when he has spent the whole life as a householder with a large bundle of responsibility on his shoulders. Even the cosmic sustainer and care-taker, Lord Vishnu had to keep her with him in order to take care of the material needs of his subjects. An entire Upanishad, called the 'Saubhagya Laxmi Upanishad' belonging to the Rig Veda tradition is dedicated to this goddess. This Upanishad is chapter no.9 of this humble author's anthology of Rig Veda Upanishads.]

४/२४. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या गौरी भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yā gaurī bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/24 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे गौरी (पार्वती) स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२४)।

4/24. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as 'Gauri', the Goddess who is the divine consort of Lord Shiva and considered as the Mother Goddess. [The Goddess Gauri is also known as Parvati who is regarded as the Mother of all other forms of goddesses. She is a personified form of Shakti, the cosmic dynamic powers and energy of the supreme Brahm by which the latter does anything. This Shakti is not different or separate from Brahm but only a manifestation of the latter's cosmic dynamism, energy and powers. Since Lord Ram is none else but Brahm personified, it is said here that all the dynamisms and energies that are present in this creation, and all the Goddesses who are personifications of these grand virtues of Brahm, are actually the Lord himself playing out these roles in a secret form.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/24).

४/२५. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या जानकी भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yā jānakī bhūrbhuvaḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/25 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे जानकी (सीता) स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२५)।

4/25. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as ‘Janki’, the daughter of King Janak and his divine consort. [Janki is also known as Sita. She is an incarnation of Goddess Laxmi or Rama who is the divine consort of Lord Vishnu and a manifestation of Shakti in its macrocosmic form.]¹

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/25).

[¹Sita is the cosmic primordial primary energy and power called ‘Shakti’, which was responsible for setting in motion the process of creation, personified. She is the divine consort of Lord Ram who is none other than Lord Vishnu in a human form. An entire Upanishad, called ‘Sito-panishad’ is dedicated to her. It extols her divine, ethereal, holy and sublime aspects, and is the 4th Upanishad of the Atharva Veda.

As has been pointed out earlier, Shakti is the dynamism and energy of the supreme transcendental Brahm in a personified female form. Shakti is an integral part of Brahm and is nothing but one of the Supreme Being’s various forms to perform specific functions. It is this Shakti that has revealed itself as Sita or Janki. Hence, it is appropriate to say that it is Lord Ram who himself has revealed as Sita. Again, since it is Brahm that pervades in each pore of creation and there is nothing in this creation that is not Brahm, it clearly follows that Sita is also a form of this universal divinity known as Brahm.]

४/२६. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च त्रैलोक्यं भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaśca trailokyam bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai
vai namo namaḥ // 4/26 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे त्रिलोकी— भूः, भुवः और स्वः — स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म भी हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२६)।

4/26. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the three legendary worlds, and hence is called the 'Trilokya'. [The word 'Trilokyam' has two connotations—one is that the Lord is able to see everything in all the three worlds, that nothing is hidden or secret from him because he is omniscient and all-knowing as well as a resident in the inner-self of all the creatures as their Atma or soul, and two, that all the three worlds are his revelation, or that all the three phases of creation—viz. the past, the present and the future—are uniformly pervaded by the Lord who is the omnipresent and all-encompassing Supreme Being of creation. The three worlds are the terrestrial world, the lower heaven represented by the sky just above the surface of the earth, and the upper heavens represented by the deep recesses of the sky.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/26).

४/२७. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यः सूर्यः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaḥ sūryaḥ bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/27 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे सूर्यदेव स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२७)।

4/27. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as 'Surya¹', the Sun God in his subtle manifestation, and as the visible celestial Sun in his more visible form.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/27).

[¹The Sun/Surya—The Sanskrit word for the Sun God or Aditya is Surya. This word has three connotations—viz. (i) Sarteha—one how moves. This refers to the Sun because it moves constantly moves across the sky. It also refers to the supreme cosmic Consciousness that makes all movement possible. (ii) Sviryate—this means one who receives and accepts. This virtue refers to the fact that all offerings offered to the fire sacrifice are done in the presence of the Sun, and since the latter is the celestial cauldron of fire all the offerings are deemed to be offered to it. In another plane, it refers to the Jiva, the living being, who receives stimuli from the world and then accepts them and deduces that the world from where they originate is real and true. (iii) Suvateha—meaning one who shines. This is very obvious in the case of the Sun. This virtue refers to the supreme Self or supreme Consciousness that is self-illuminated and self-effulgent.

Sun God or Surya appears first in the Rig Veda, 1/50. He is one of the chief Gods that sustain life. He is closely related to the Fire God; the Sun is a visible manifestation of the fire element. The sun is regarded as the ‘eye’ of the Viraat Purush, and at the time of creation when this Viraat Purush revealed himself as the individual creature such as for example a cow, a horse and a man, the Sun God took up residence in the eye (refer Aitereyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and Canto 2, verse nos. 3-4). He is also regarded as visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm (refer Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, 2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9. The Sun God watched the deeds done by all the creatures (Rig Veda, 1/50/2). The Sun is like the Atma of all the creatures (Akchu Upanishad, Canto 1, verse no. 1; Rig Veda, 1/115/1; Shatpath Brahman, 14/3/2/9).

The Sun is the brightest, the most splendorous, the brilliantly radiant, the most majestic and grandest entity in the entire firmament. The whole length and breadth of the sky is lit with its light; all the objects present in the sky, visible or invisible, are illuminated by its light. It is the eternal and infinite celestial source of light, heat and energy; it inspires, fosters, sustains and protects life in this world; it is synonymous with and a metaphor for life in all its dimensions. Its splendour and radiance makes it an apt metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, erudition, sagacity and enlightenment. As an embodiment of this virtue of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and sagacity he has been held in high esteem and as the great teacher and preacher of eclectic knowledge pertaining to the philosophy expounded by the Upanishads. He had assumed the form of a horse and revealed the Shukla Yajur Veda to the great sage Yagyavalkya. He was also the teacher of Hanuman, said to be incarnate Wind God and Lord Shiva, and who was the great, most ardent and the wisest devotee of Lord Ram.

From the physical perspective also, the Sun is regarded as a fount of light, energy and heat which supports life in all forms in this physical world. No life is imaginable without the presence of the Sun.

According to mythological accounts, the Sun God was the son of sage Kashyap and his wife Aditi from whom all the Gods were born. He is said to be a revelation from the eye of the Viraat Purush also known as Vishnu who is the macrocosmic all-pervading and all-encompassing vast and invisible form of the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm. The physical Sun in the sky is the Viraat Purush’s visible form. He was married to Sangya, the daughter of

Vishwakarma who is regarded as the architect, builder and planner of the Gods. Sangya had two sons and one daughter from the Sun God—viz. the sons named Shraadhha-dev also called Vaivaswat Manu and Yam the god of death, and the daughter named Yamuna which is also the name of a famous river in India. Sangya could not bear the intensity of the Sun's heat and light, so she left her 'shadow' or image and herself went away disguised as a mare to do severe penance. From this 'shadow' were produced two sons and a daughter. The two sons were Shani God who is believed to be full of malice and evil forebodings reflecting the genes of his mother as a dark shadow, and Saarvarni Manu, and the daughter was Tapti literally meaning one who is fierce and hot. In due course of time, the Sun God found out that his real wife Sangya was involved in doing severe Tapa, so he was extremely pleased with her and brought her back. It was from her form as a mare that the Ashwini Kumars were born. They derived their name from the root 'Ashwa' meaning a horse. These twin sons of the Sun God are regarded as the medicine men of the Gods.

The Sun God revealed himself as Sugriv, the king of the monkey race, during Treta-Yug when Lord Ram incarnated, and as Karna during Dwapar when Lord Krishna came as an incarnation of Vishnu. Sun God rides a chariot driven by Arun who is the son of Vintaa (his mother) and the elder brother of Garud, the legendary heron or eagle who is the mount of Lord Vishnu. The seven horses of the chariot represent the seven colours of the Sun's light. He is constantly on the move and controls and regulates the seasons, months, solstice and year.

The Surya Mandal, i.e. the divine abode of the Sun God, has been narrated in the Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 10, verse nos. 1-23. It is also referred to in the Tripadvibhut Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 5, paragraph no. 15 as falling in the path of a spiritual aspirant who, upon leaving his gross body, is going astride the Garud (the divine vehicle of Vishnu which is represented by the OM Mantra here) through the path of the sky to the heaven where Lord Vishnu lives.

References of the Upanishads dealing with the Sun God—

- (a) Rig Veda = Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 4, Canto 2, verse no. 4.
- (b) Sam Veda = Chandogya Upanishad, 1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13; 6/4/2 etc.; Savitri Upanishad.
- (c) Shukla Yajur Veda = and Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15.
- (d) Krishna Yajur Veda = Akchu Upanishad, Cantos 1 and 2; Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taittiriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1; Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2; Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2; Naryan Upanishad, verse no. 1.
- (e) Atharva Veda = Prashna Upanishad, Canto 1; Surya Upanishad; Gayatri Upanishad.

According to Yoga Upanishads, the Sun God has his symbolic presence in the naval of the body in the Nabhi Chakra or the Manipur Chakra, and as the fire element in the Mooladhar Chakra, the Swadhisthan Chakra and the Kundalini. The dynamic energy of the sun represented by its life-giving powers is revealed in the form of consciousness that flows in the Pingla Naadi, the nerve passing through the right nostril.

The Akchu Upanishad lists some of the virtues of the Sun God in its Canto 1, verse no. 1 which is exclusively dedicated to his grand virtues.

Aditya or the Sun God, or his visible form as the celestial Sun, has been repeatedly regarded by the Upanishads as a visible manifestation of the Viraat Purush who himself is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm. For example, Sam Veda's Chandogya Upanishad—1/6/3, 5, 6; 1/10/7; 2/9; 2/14; 2/24/12-14; 3/1-11; 3/18; 5/13;

6/4/2 etc.; Shukla Yajur Veda's Brihad Aranyak Upanishad—2/1/2; 2/5/5; 3/7/9; 3/9/5; 5/15; Krishna Yajur Veda's Brahmo-panishad, verse no. 1; Taitteriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

The sun is the eye of the Supreme Being—refer Aiteriyo-panishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse no. 4, and finds his abode in the creature's eye—refer Aiteriyo-panishad, Canto 2, verse no. 4.

The Prashna Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 4-6, 8 describes the Sun God as the Pran—the vital life giving factor in creation, the life consciousness, and in Canto 1, verse nos. 9, 12-15 as Prajapati—the creator, motivator, nourisher, sustainer, protector and caretaker of the subjects of this creation. He is called the Fire God or the Vaishwanar Agni, the Viraat Purush, the Pran or life consciousness that supports all life in this world—Canto 1, verse no. 7.

The Akchu Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition is fully dedicated to the Sun God. It has two parts—in its Canto 1 sage Sankriti offers prayers to the Sun God, and Canto 2 contains the metaphysical and spiritual teachings of the Sun God for the benefit of the sage.

The Taitteriya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition, in its Valli 1, Anuvaak 1, verse no. 1, says that the Sun God is known as 'Mitra', literally meaning a friend. This is because the Sun God's benevolence and life-sustaining abilities make him a fast friend of every single living being in creation. He fosters life and is a friend of life rather than being its enemy by annihilating it. He helps the world to develop and grow as well as to acquire its stupendous magnificence and glory—refer Taitteriya Upanishad, Valli 1, Anuvaak 5, verse no. 2.

He is also known as 'Savita'—refer Savitru-panishad of Sam Veda tradition, and Shwetashwatar Upanishad, Canto 2 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.

The Narayan Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 1 says that he was born from Lord Narayan, i.e. Lord Vishnu. The same thing is asserted in Brahmo-panishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 1 which states that Aditya, the Sun God, is a manifestation of Lord Vishnu. But this is understandable because Vishnu and the Viraat Purush is the same Lord having different names according to the degree of subtlety and the scriptural text one is referring to; both are synonymously used. Whereas the Viraat Purush was the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm that appeared in the first stage of creation when Brahm decided to initiate it, he was called Vishnu at a little later stage when the visible creation was just about to be initiated, because it is from Vishnu that Brahma the creator was born who later gave shape to the creation itself.

'Aditya' or the Sun God appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda-- 1/41/4-6; 2/27; 8/47/14-18; 10/185; Sam Veda—395; 397; Yajur Veda—23/5; 34/54; Atharva Veda—5/3/9-10; 16/3.]

४/२८. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यः सोमः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaḥ somāḥ bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/28 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे चन्द्रदेव स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२८)।

4/28. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as ‘Som or Soma’¹. [The word ‘Som’ refers to the Moon God, while the word ‘Soma’ refers to a drink derived from the sap of a herb of the same name that is used as sanctified drink during fire sacrifices. It is white in colour. This drink is offered to the Gods as well as taken as sanctified drink by the participants of the rituals. It is said that Soma, the drink, is stored in Som, the celestial Moon, thereby giving the latter its name ‘Som’. It is the elixir that gives ecstasy and bliss to the Gods. In the present context it means that both the elixir of life known as Soma as well as the Moon God who is charged with its custody are actually the Supreme Being revealed in their forms. The Soma is the Supreme Being’s magnificent quality of giving happiness, joys, bliss and ecstasy, while the glorious Moon in the heaven represents the virtues of providing peace, tranquility, calmness and rest to the creature who is finding himself agitated and restless due to the continuous turmoil and the numerous torments and miseries of this existential world.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/28).

[¹The Som or the Moon God (also known as Chandrama)—He appears first in the Rig Veda, 10/85/19). He is the patron God of night. His origin is in the Mana (heart and mind; the emotions and thoughts) of the Parmatma or the supreme Lord (the Viraat Purush or Vishnu) (Yajur Veda, 31/12; Taittiriya Brahman, 3/10/8/5). His existence depends upon the Sun God. On the dark night, he is supposed to enter the Sun (Aiteriya Brahman, 8/28).

Chandrama is synonymous with Som, the divine elixir and sanctified drink drunk during the religious sacrifices as it gives its drinker peace and a long life (Kaushatiki Brahman, 16/5; Aiteriya Brahman, 7/11). He is the controller of seasons and months; he always changes so appear to be like a new born everyday. He gives peace and long life to the ‘Stota’, the chanter of hymns as prayers (Rig Veda, 10/85/19).

Chandra or the Moon God or Som appears in the Vedas as follows—Rig Veda—10/85/19; Yajur Veda—1/28; Atharva Veda—6/78/1-2; 19/1.

The Yogshikha Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition describes this Moon as being as the symbolic form of the water element. The moon is said to be the celestial pitcher of Amrit, the elixir of eternity and bliss that is drunk by the Gods. In the human body, it is represented by the Eda Naadi passing through the left nostrils and which is used during do Pranayam. [Refer Canto 1, verse 166.] It is also present as the crescent moon, the Ardha Chandrakar Chakra, which is said to be the shape of the water element of which the patron deity is Vishnu, the sustainer of creation, and located from the knee to the hip region. [Refer Canto 1, verse 176 and Canto 5, verse

no. 13.] At other places it describes the symbolic importance of creating a union of the moon and sun as metaphor for the union of the creature with the supreme Brahm. [Refer Canto 1, verse nos. 56 and 68 for instance.] In the context of Pranayam it is used to indicate the bliss obtained by the ascetic. [Refer Canto 1, verse nos. 120, 127.] Canto 1, verse no. 133 of this Upanishad describes the great Mantra ‘So-a-ham’ and asserts that the moon stands for the letter ‘sa’ of this Mantra. Other instances where moon appears in Yogshikha Upanishad are Canto 1, verse nos. 133, 146, 176, Canto 3, verse no. 11, and Canto 6, verse no. 4.

The Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 4 asserts that the Moon God is Vishnu personified. This is because Vishnu is the sustainer and nourisher of creation much like the Som which is a divine elixir that sustains the Gods and gives them eternity. Another reason is that the physical form of Som is like the male semen which harbours life intrinsically inside it and is the means by which creation is brought about, and Vishnu in his more sublime form known as Viraat Purush is also the Lord from whom the entire creation emerged.

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 38 says that Chandrama or the Moon God is one of the ten Digpaals or custodians of the ten directions of the celestial globe. He is the patron deity of the north-western direction and worshipped in that corner. Verse no. 39 says that his weapon is known as Gadaa or the mace.

The Moon God is said to be a custodian God of the Soma, a white coloured drink derived from the sap of a plant of the same name. It is used as a sanctified drink during fire and other religious sacrifices and is offered to Gods. It is said to provide ecstasy and bliss. The Moon derives its name as ‘Som’ because of the fact that it is considered as the heavenly pitcher of this Soma juice stored by the Gods.]

४/२९. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यानि च नक्षत्राणि भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yāni ca nakṣatrāṇi bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai
vai namo namaḥ // 4/29 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे समस्त नक्षत्रगण स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (२९)।

4/29. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the different ‘Nakshatras’¹ or stars and their constellations. [In other words, all the gross bodies in the heaven such as the numerous stars and their equally numerous clusters are one of the myriad forms of the supreme Lord known as Ram.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/29).

[¹The Nakshatras—The word Nakshatra refers to the star or constellation (group or cluster of independent stars) that is present in the lunar mansion which is the 1/27th part of the path of the moon's revolution around the earth. It represents 13.33 degrees of the sky. Since the sidereal revolution time of the moon is a little less than 27 days and 8 hours, the moon travels through one Nakshatra during the course of a day. The day is therefore named after the particular Nakshatra through which the moon is passing on a particular day according to the lunar calendar. The Nakshatras occupy a very important place in astronomical and astrological calculations.

The Atharva Veda (14/7) and Maitraayaniya Sanhita (2/13/20) lists the names of twenty eight Nakshatras. These are the following—Ashvini, Bharani, Krittika, Rohini, Mrigshiras, Aardraa, Punarvasu, Pushya, Aashlesha, Maghaa, Purva-phaalguni, Uttar-phaalguni, Hastaa, Chitraa, Swaati, Vishaakhaa, Anuraadhaa, Jyeshthaa, Mulaa, Purva-aashaadha, Uttar-aashaadha, Shravanaa, Dhanisthaa, Shatabhisha, Purva-Bhaadra-padaa, Uttar-Bhaadra-padaa, and Revati.

The Purans however consider that the twenty seven Nakshatras are daughters of Daksha Prajapati and married to the Moon God called Chandra.

The Nakshatras are related to the twelve Zodiac signs called the Raashis. The Nakshatras are further classified as males and females, as well as benevolent ones and malevolent ones depending upon their positive or negative impact on the creature.]

४/३०. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये च नवग्रहाः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān ye ca navagrahāḥ bhūrbhuvahḥ svastasmai
vai namo namaḥ // 4/30 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे नवग्रह स्वरूप हैं। (नवग्रह निम्न है— सूर्य, चन्द्र, मंगल, बुध, बृहस्पति, शुक्र, शनि, राहु, केतु)। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३०)।

4/30. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Nava Grahas'¹ or nine Grahas or planets. [In other words, all the planets in the heaven are one of the numerous forms of the supreme Lord known as Ram.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/30).

[¹The Nava-Grahas or nine planets—The Navgrahas are the following—Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu.

According to some texts, there are only eight Grahas or Astha Grahas because they treat the last two, i.e. Rahu and Ketu, as one entity. Refer Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda tradition, Kandika 2, verse no. 9. This Upanishad is in honour of Lord Rudra as another name of Brahm, and says that Rudra is a personification of the eight Grahas.

The Vishnu Puran, section 2, canto 12, verse no. 1-28 describes the Grahas and their divine chariots and their horses.]

४/३१. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये चाष्टौ लोकपालाः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān ye cāṣṭau lokapālāḥ bhūrbhuvah
suvastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/31 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे आठों लोकपालों के स्वरूप हैं। (८ लोकपाल निम्न हैं— इन्द्र, अग्नि, यम, नर्ऋति, वरुण, वायु, कुबेर, ईश)। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३१)।

4/31. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the ‘eight Vasus’¹. [The Vasus are the Nature’s gift to creature. They were the natural assets formed by the supreme Brahm so as to make life feasible and convenient in creation. In other words, the supreme Brahm who is also known as Lord Ram not only created this world but ensured that it is well provided for and its basic needs are taken care of by manifesting himself in the form of these eight primary requirements of life. This is the reason why one of the names of Vishnu is ‘Vasudeo’—the Lord of Vasus. It ought to be noted here that Lord Ram is an incarnation of Vishnu or Vasudeo.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/32).

[¹The eight Vasus— These Vasus are the various patron Gods who preside over the essential elements of life. They are eight in number as follows—Vishnu who is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and ‘Ray’ representing glory and fame. The element ‘Fire’ is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the Vasus. The ‘fire’ element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic

cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. On the other hand, Lord Vishnu is the passive force of creation represented by his other form of Viraat Purush which is the primary male aspect of creation. Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world.

The Vasus are symbolic Gods who represent those essentials aspects of creation without which life would be difficult to conceive and sustain and finally conclude.

The eight Vasus are the patron Gods who provide succour and a dwelling place for the whole creation. They symbolise those primary necessities of life without which existence is not possible. They are— (i) Kuber (the God of wealth and prosperity), (ii) the Sun God (who provides energy and food) and his rays and radiance (i.e. sunlight and the energy that it provides), (iii) Shiva (the concluder or annihilator of the creation), (iv) Vishnu (the sustainer), (v) the Water God (called Varun), (vi) the Fire God (called Agni), (vii) any body of water such as a pond, a river etc., and (viii) holy and pious people (who give advice and guidance to the creatures of the creation). According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/3, the Vasus are the following—Fire, Earth, Air, Antariksha (the space of the solar system), Aditya (Sun), Duloka (heavens), the Moon, and the Nakshatras (the stars and the planets).

According to Purans, the eight Vasus are the following—Dhruv, Dhar, Som/Soma (the sap of an elixir-providing plant called Som/Soma which is used during religious ceremonies as sanctified liquid offered to the Gods; it is white in colour and is said to be stored in the moon), Aapah (water), Anil (wind), Anal (fire), Pratush and Prabhaas.

These eight Vasus are the semi-Gods who symbolise the various types of assets needed to sustain this world. They therefore represent such assets as jewels, precious stones and gems, gold and other forms of wealth and property. Vasus also refers to the fire and water elements as well as their grosser forms as the terrestrial fire and water bodies such as ponds and lakes; to the virtue of radiance, splendour and glory; to the ray of light; to Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), Shiva, Sun, Vishnu, and a simple and pious gentleman.

The Ekakchar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse no. 7, says that these Vasus are manifestations of Brahm in order to provide the creation with the necessities of life.

The Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Kandika (Canto) 1 says that the Vasus were created in the beginning of creation from the first Matra 'A' of OM representing the first leg of the supreme Brahm along with Brahma the creator, the Rig Veda, the Gayatri Chand and the Grahapatya Agni.

The Brihajjabal Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Brahman 4, verse no. 16 lists the eight Vasus as follows—Ghar, Dhruv, Soma, Kripa, Anil, Anal, Pratyush and Prabhash.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Vasus, along with the Rudras and Adityas etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh

was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

Lord Vishnu has one of his names as ‘Vasudeo’ because he is the sustainer and protector of creation, signifying his undisputed lordship over all the essential elements in Nature, called the Vasus of which there are eight in number, which were created at the beginning of creation to help sustain the upcoming creation. It ought to be noted here that Vishnu is also called Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, and it is from this form of Brahm that the creator of the visible creation, i.e. Brahma the old patriarch of creation, had emerged atop a divine lotus that sprouted from the navel of Vishnu. In other words, everything has its origin in the supreme Brahm.

The word ‘Vishnu’ consists of two components—‘Vishwa’ meaning the world or the entire creation, and ‘Anu’ meaning an atom. Hence, this is made up of atoms called Vishnu, and therefore the latter pervades throughout this creation. The whole creation is a manifestation of Vishnu. The divine glories of Lord Vishnu have been extolled in the Tripadvibhut Maha Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 1, paragraph 5-6; Canto 8, paragraph nos. 17, as well as in Vishnu Puran, Chapter 1, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-32, 55-70.]

४/३२. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये चाष्टौ वसवः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān ye cāṣṭau vasavaḥ bhūrbhuvah
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/32 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे आठ वसु स्वरूप हैं। (८ वसु निम्न हैं— कुबेर, शिव, विष्णु, सूर्य, जल, अग्नि, रत्न, सोना)। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३२)।

4/32. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the ‘eight Lokpaals¹’. [The word ‘Lokpaal’ means one who takes care of the world. Obviously, this role is played by Vishnu amongst the Trinity Gods. It is Vishnu who has incarnated as Lord Ram, so the similarity is evident. Here the implication is that the it is Lord Ram or Lord Vishnu who has manifested himself as the eight Lokpaals to take care of the eight directions of the gross world.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/32).

[¹The 8 Lokpals are the custodians of the eight directions of the world. They are represented by the following— (i) Indra (the king of Gods), (ii) Agni (the Fire God), (iii) Yam (the Death God; also called Dharma Raj because he upholds righteousness and nobility of thoughts and conducts), (iv) Nirriti (the God who controls death due to sins and evil tendencies as opposed to Yam who judges the destiny of those who die depending upon the content of righteousness and probity element in their earlier life), (v) Varun (the Water God), (vi) Vaayu (the Wind God), (vii) Kuber (the treasurer of Gods), and (viii) Ish (Lord Shiva). Though Brahma and Anant (Vishnu or Sheshnath, the legendary hooded serpent on whom Vishnu reclines in the cosmic ocean called Kshir Sagar) are also considered guardians of the world and are listed as the last two amongst the ten Digpals, but the above eight Gods are regarded as the Lokpals.

Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 4, verse no. 36-37 mentions the name of eight Lokpals, and verse no. 38 mentions the names of eight Digpals. Verse no. 39 lists their weapons.]

४/३३. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये चैकादश रुद्राः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān ye caikādaśa rudrāḥ bhūrbhuvah
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/33 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे ११ रुद्र स्वरूप हैं। (११ रुद्र निम्न हैं— मनु, मनु, महिनस, महान्, शिव, ऋतध्वज्, उग्ररेता, भव, काल, वामदेव, धृतव्रत— श्रीमदभागवत, ३/१२/१२)। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३३)।

4/33. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'eleven Rudras'¹. [The word 'Rudra' means angry, and it is one of the names of Lord Shiva, the concluder of creation and the third of the Trinity Gods. In other words, Lord Ram had assumed the form of Rudra or Shiva in order to bring this creation to conclusion. Refer verse no. 4/5 and 4/15.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/33).

[¹The eleven Rudras— Rudra is the angry form of Lord Shiva. The word means 'the terrible one; the angry and ruthless one; one who roars and thunders; one who makes the enemy weep; one who destroys this trans-migratory world of birth and death; one who destroys ignorance and delusions; one who eliminates evil and perversions.'

Rudra is a Vedic deity and has been eulogized in three full Suktas (hymns) dedicated to him. These are Rig Veda's 1/114/1-11; 2/33/1-15, and Yajur Veda's 16/1-66. Besides these Suktas, Rudra is honoured as a deity at a number of places in the Vedas—viz. Rig Veda—1/43/1-4, 5/42/11, 7/46/1-4, 7/59/12; Atharva Veda—5/6/3-4, 6/55/2-3, 7/92/1, 11/2; and Yajur Veda—11/54.

Rudra is regarded as the father of Marut, the Wind God (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). Rudra assumes many forms—usually it is eleven forms (Taittiriya Sanhita, 3/4/9/7), but sometimes they are also said to be thirty-three in number (Taittiriya Sanhita, 1/4/11/1). Rudra is regarded as having a close relationship with Agni, the Fire God (Shatpath Brahman, 5/2/4/13). The Padma Puran, Swargakhanda, Chapter 8 mentions only eight Rudras. These eight, eleven or thirty-three forms of Rudra might mean as many aspects of Shiva.

However, in terms of the Upanishads, the eleven Rudras stand for the ten vital winds called Prans + one Mana or mind. The ten Prans are five chief Prans such as Pran (breath), Apaana, Samaana, Udaana and Vyana, and five subsidiary Prans such as Nag, Kurma, Krikara, Devdutta and Dhananjaya. [Refer—Trishikhi Brahmin Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 77-87 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition; Dhyana Bindu Upanishad, verse nos. 551/2-57 of Krishna Yajur Veda tradition.]

Rudra is said to have created such mythological figures as Bhuts (ghosts), Pretas (disembodied spirits), Pishacha (goblins), Khusmaandas (malignant imps). In iconography, he has been depicted as wearing long tresses coiled on the head, has strong powerful arms, has a body decorated variously with serpents or priceless ornaments, and holds a strong and invincible bow and arrow as well as a thunderbolt. When necessary, he becomes ferocious and charges at his enemies on a chariot or on foot, while at the other times he is full of mercy and compassion. He is closely associated with forests and mountains, and is also the patron deity of herbs and medicinal plants. Hence, he is the killer of diseases and a great healer. Here, 'healing' would mean spiritual healing rather than physical ailments afflicting a creature.

He destroys sins and evil tendencies in the world, and grants the boon of liberation and happiness.

According to the epic Mahabharata, Anushasanaparva, Chapter 14, it is Shiva in the form of Rudra who destroys this creation at the end of one cycle of creation.

The Sharav Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its verse no. 6, describes Rudra as Sharav—the killer or destroyer. In this Upanishad, Lord Shiva had assumed this form to liberate Vishnu from the form of Nrisingh (a half man and half lion form) which the Lord had taken to kill the demon Hiranyakashipu who had been tormenting the devotees of Vishnu to such an extent that he did not spare even his son Prahalad. After slaying this demon, Nrisingh roamed around in the forests striking terror in other creatures. It was then that Shiva, the universal Lord who has been honoured with the epithet of 'Mahadev' as he is the greatest and supreme God, had assumed the form of Sharav, the killer, and liberated Vishnu from the body of Nrisingh. Thus liberated, Vishnu had thanked him a lot and went to his divine abode called Vaikunth. So this ferocious form of Shiva known as Sharav was also called 'Rudra', the angry and ferocious form of the Lord. One can imagine the fight that might have raged between Nrisingh and Rudra, and obviously Rudra must have been more ferocious than Nrisingh in order to subdue the latter.

There is another connotation of the word 'Sharav'. The word literally means the killer or slayer. In other words, Sharav is that form of the Supreme Being which instils fear in the heart of evil and pervert creatures, and kills or eliminates their evil tendencies.

The word also refers to ‘the Lord who shines in the heart of his devotees’ as their Atma or pure consciousness.

The creature or the embodied soul is called ‘Shar’ or the form of the ethereal spirit that has assumed a gross physical body having a head. One who cuts off the head is known as ‘Sharav’. The head is a metaphor for pride and ego and their accompanying traits of hypocrisy, haughtiness and arrogance. It is in the head that all evil planning is done, and it is the head that inspires the creature to indulge in all sorts of vices and inauspicious deeds. When this happens, the great God, the Parameshwar, makes it sure that the soul of such a creature is liberated from the sinful body in which it has been trapped by killing the gross body and liberating the soul.

So, while on the surface it appears to be a physical fight between two powerful creatures, one being the Shar and the other being the Sharav, here referring to Nrisingh and Rudra respectively, it is actually a system evolved by Nature whereby evil and perversions are kept under check. It is a system instituted by the Supreme Being himself to regulate and maintain balance, order and law in his creation. Though Nrisingh was Lord Vishnu himself in that form, the latter forgot who he actually was once the Lord had assumed a physical form. This is the effect of Maya—the overwhelming power of delusions that automatically comes with having a gross body like that of ordinary creatures. This situation also highlights the reason why all the creatures are under the overpowering control of Maya—if Maya can delude Vishnu to forget about who he is and wander in the forests as some cruel creature in his form as Nrisingh then it is little wonder that ordinary creatures are held under the overpowering sway of Maya.

Now, who would liberate such primarily innocent souls trapped by Maya, and who would provide protection to other innocent creatures who are being subjected to torments by this single deluded and evil-possessed soul? Naturally it is their supreme Father who is very merciful and who is greatly pained at the predicament in which his off springs, the creatures, find themselves in. So this Father intervenes not only to free the trapped soul in the evil body, but also to provide succour and solace to other creatures who are being tormented by this single individual.

Thus, the Parameshwar assumed the form of Sharav or Rudra to liberate Vishnu from the evil body of Nrisingh.

The 11 Rudras—(1) Lord Shiva has eleven forms called Rudras. The eleven Rudras are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva. They are the following:--(i) Mannu, (ii) Manu, (iii) Mahinas, (iv) Mahaan, (v) Shiva, (vi) Ritdwaj, (vii) Ugraretaa, (viii) Bhava, (ix) Kaal, (x) Vaamdeo, and (xi) Dhritvrat. The eleven Rudras appear in Rig Veda 1/43/1, and Taittiriya Brahman 3/4/9/7. They are regarded as the father of the Wind God or the Maruts (Rig Veda, 2/33/1). The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened.

(2) The eleven Rudras according to Vishnu Puran (1/1/15) are the following—Har, Bahuroop, Trayambak, Aparaaajeet, Shambhu, Vrishakapi, Kapardi, Raivat, Mrigvyadh, Sharva, and Kapaali.

(3) Lord Shiva has eleven forms, and one of them is ‘Rudra’, which literally means anger, wrath and vehemence. The Lord is considered to be the most enlightened of the Trinity Gods, and is therefore called ‘Maheshwar’. He always remains in a meditative posture, always contemplating and meditating on the supreme Soul and the Truth. But still he shows anger and mercilessness, because one of his tasks is to punish the evil and sinful ones by ruthlessly slaying them in order to protect the good and righteous souls in the creation. Further, when his meditation and peace is

disturbed he also becomes angry. He remains aloof and disinterested in the world, because he is very wise and enlightened, and he stays in the form of an ascetic. Ordinary people think that he is proud, arrogant and haughty because he does not give a damn to worldly formalities and niceties of behaviour. Shiva's failure to conform to set norms of proper and sane conduct makes him look most odd God.

The word 'Rudra' is literally used as a metaphor for anger, wrath, vehemence and cussedness. But this a very misleading title for Shiva because there are a number of great Upanishads which describe Rudra as none but the Supreme Being known as the transcendental Brahm from whom the entire creation has emerged, who sustains it and in whom the creation would finally collapse. It is this Brahm in the form of Rudra who is treated at the supreme Lord God of creation, and hence is called Maheshwar. The Rudra Hridaya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition and Atharvashir Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition are exclusively dedicated to this theme. The Dakshin Murti Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda describes the esoteric significance of the Shiva Tattva or the essential knowledge of Shiva who is the greatest Guru or moral preceptor and teacher of the creatures.

The Atharvashir Upanishad of Atharva Veda is especially relevant here because it explains the various epithets used to describe the virtues and glories of the supreme transcendental Brahm by Lord Rudra himself, and upon close reading it would be very clear that Rudra is describing Brahm when he describes himself.

The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Rudras, along with the Vasus and Adityas etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.]

४/३४. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् ये द्वादशादित्याः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān ye ca dvādaśādityāḥ bhūrbhuvah
suvastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/34 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे १२ आदित्य स्वरूप हैं। (१२ आदित्य अदिति के निम्न पुत्र हैं— सूर्य, इन्द्र, वामन, विष्णु एवं ८ वसु जिनका नाम पद संख्या ३१ में वर्णित है)। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३४)।

4/34. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'twelve Adityas¹'. [The Aditya is the Sun God, and is regarded as the most potent and powerful evidence of the existence of the Supreme Being. Refer verse no. 4/27. This verse means that it is Lord

Ram as the Supreme Being who has not only revealed himself as the Sun God but also keeps the celestial Sun burning and sustaining life in this world. The entire solar system revolves around the Sun, implying that the entire wheel of creation is centered on Lord Ram. The Lord is like the central axis around which the wheel spins.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/34).

[¹The twelve Adityas—(a) According to mythology, there are said to be twelve Adityas which are simply as many forms of the Sun God. These are the revelations of Brahm in the form of the Sun to carry out the following functions of creation—(a) take care of the world (Rig Veda, 2/27/4); (b) are like the heads (Taittiriya Brahman, 1/2/3/3) and eyes (Jaimini, Uttar. 2/1/2/3) of all the creatures.

These twelve Adityas appear first in the Rig Veda 1/41/4-6 and 2/27. They are the sons of Aditi, the mother of Gods (Atharva Veda, 8/9/21). They are the following—the eight Vasus + Indra + Sun + Vishnu + Shiva = twelve in number.

(b) According to Brihad Aranyak Upanishad 3/9/5, the twelve months of the year represent these twelve Adityas, one month for one Aditya. In this Upanishad, sage Yagyawalkya draws a parallel between the twelve months of a year and the twelve Adityas for the following reasons—First, with the passage of one complete year, a corresponding number of years are subtracted from the total number of years that a person is supposed to live in this world. That is, death comes so much the nearer to him. The passage of the sun across the sky from dawn to dusk is used as a symbolic way of depicting the passage of the life of a man from his birth till his death. Since there are twelve mythological suns and twelve months in a year, a parallel is drawn between them and the life of a man.

Second, the whole life of an individual creature as well as the entire creation as a whole depends upon the various seasons that appear in a year. If even one of the seasons is disturbed, the entire cycle of life is disturbed correspondingly. For the smooth functioning of life, all the seasons must appear in a rhythmic and systematic manner, and it is a scientific fact that the seasons, upon which the life on earth is so dependent, also themselves depend upon the sun. That is why the Adityas are termed as being synonymous with the twelve months of the year as well as with the life cycle of creation.

(c) According to Vishnu Puran, the twelve Adityas are the following—Dhaataa, Araymaa, Mitra, Varun, Anshu, Bhug, Indra, Vivaswaan, Pushaa, Parjanya, Twashtaa, and Vishnu.

The Sun God is worshipped by twelve names during the twelve months of a year. These names and the months are as follows—(1) as Dhata during the first Hindu month of Chaitra also known as Madhu (roughly corresponding to mid-March and mid-April); (2) as Aryama during the second Hindu month of Vaishakha also known as Madhav (roughly corresponding to mid-April to mid-May); (3) as Mitra during the third Hindu month of Jyestha also known as Shukra (roughly corresponding to mid-May and mid-June); (4) as Varun during the fourth Hindu month of Ashad also known as Shuchi (roughly corresponding to mid-June and mid-July); (5) as Indra during the fifth Hindu month of Sravan also known as Nabha (roughly corresponding to mid-July and mid-August); (6) as Vivaswan during the sixth Hindu month of Bhadrapad also known as Nabhasya (roughly corresponding to mid-August and mid-September); (7) as Pusha during the seventh Hindu month of Aashwani also known as

Tapa (roughly corresponding to mid-September and mid-October); (8) as Kratu during the eighth Hindu month of Kartik also known as Tapasya (roughly corresponding to mid-October and mid-November); (9) as Anshu during the ninth Hindu month of Marga Shirsha also known as Saha (roughly corresponding to mid-November and mid-December); (10) as Bhag during the tenth Hindu month of Paush also known as Pushya (roughly corresponding to mid-December and mid-January); (11) as Twasta during the eleventh Hindu month of Magh also known as Esh or Ish (roughly corresponding to mid-January and mid-February); and (12) as Vishnu during the twelfth Hindu month of Phalgun also known as Urj (roughly corresponding to mid-February and mid-March).

Since the Sun God is a manifestation of the Supreme Being known as Viraat Purush, he is like an Emperor who, during his sojourn across the sky which is like his vast realm, is accompanied by many sages called Rishis, celestial courtesans called Apsaras, celestial musicians called Gandharvas, servants called Rakshas or demons, guards known as Bhalls, and serpents called Naags. The Rishis walk in the front singing the Lord's glories in sacred hymns; the Apsaras dance to the music scores by Gandharvas; the Rakshas (demons) push the chariot from rear; the Bhalls take care of the chariot and guide it along, while the Naags pull it forward.

These attendants are also different like the forms in which the Sun God is worshipped in different months as described above. The list is outlined month-wise in the following sequence—Rishi, Apsara, Gandharva, Raksha, Bhalla and Naag.

- (1) The month of Chaitra—Rishi is Pulastya; Apsara is Kritsthal; Gandharva is Tumburu; Raksha is Heti; Bhalla is Rathkrit; and Naag is Vasuki.
 - (2) The month of Vaishakha—Rishi is Pulaha; Apsara is Punjiksthal; Gandharva is Narad; Raksha is Praheti; Bhalla is Ojaha; and Naag is Kachaneer.
 - (3) The month of Jyestha—Rishi is Atri; Apsara is Menaka; Gandharva is Hahaa; Raksha is Paurusheya; Bhalla is Rathaswan; and Naag is Takshak.
 - (4) The month of Ashadha—Rishi is Vashishta; Apsara is Rambha; Gandharva is Huhu; Raksha is Shukra; Bhalla is Chitraswan; and Naag is Sahajanya.
 - (5) The month of Sravan—Rishi is Angira; Apsara is Pramlocha; Gandharva is Vishswaavasu; Raksha is Varya; Bhalla is Srota; and Naag is Elapatra.
 - (6) The month of Bhadrapad—Rishi is Bhrgu; Apsara is Anumlocha; Gandharva is Ugrasen; Raksha is Vyagha; Bhalla is Aasaaran; and Naag is Shankhapal.
 - (7) The month of Ashwin—Rishi is Gautam; Apsara is Ghritaachi; Gandharva is Dhananjay; Raksha is Vaat; Bhalla is Suruchi; and Naag is Sushen.
 - (8) The month of Kartik—Rishi is Bhardwaj; Apsara is Varchaa; Gandharva is Parjanya; Raksha is Senjit; Bhalla is Vishwa; and Naag is Eeraawat.
 - (9) The month of Margashirsha—Rishi is Kashyap; Apsara is Urvashi; Gandharva is Ritsen; Raksha is Vidyu-chhatru; Bhalla is Taksharya; and Naag is Maashankha.
 - (10) The month of Paush—Rishi is Aayu; Apsara is Purvachitti; Gandharva is Sfurja; Raksha is Arishtanemi; Bhalla is Uurna or Oorna; and Naag is Karkotak.
 - (11) The month of Magh—Rishi is Jamdagni also known as Richik-tanaya; Apsara is Tilottama; Gandharva is Shatjit; Raksha is Brahmapet; Bhalla is Dhritrashtra; and Naag is Kambal.
 - (12) The month of Phalgun—Rishi is Vishwamitra; Apsara is Rambha; Gandharva is Suryavarchaa; Raksha is Makhaapet; Bhalla is Satyajit; and Naag is Aswatar.
- The Nrisingh Purvatapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Brahman 1, verse no. 3 says that the Adityas, along with the Vasus and Rudras etc., were born out of the third step of the divine Anushtup Chanda in which the Mantra of Lord Nrisingh was

revealed to the creator Brahma when he did severe Tapa in order to initiate the process of creation.

The Sun is said to have twelve Kalaas (shapes, forms, dimensions or aspects) and the Sun with each Kalaa would therefore be known by that name. They are called ‘Dwaadash Aditya’, meaning the twelve forms in which the Sun God is known. They are the following—Tapini, Taapini, Dhumraa, Jwaalini, Ruchi, Shushumna, Bhogadaa, Vishwaa, Bodhini, Dhaarini and Kshamaa.

Lord Ram is said to belong to the solar race because he had twelve Kalaas possessed by the Sun. There is an obvious parallel here.]

४/३५. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च भूतं भव्यं भविष्यत् भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaśca bhūtaṁ bhavyaṁ bhaviṣyat
bhūrbhuvaḥ svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/35 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे भूतकाल, वर्तमानकाल एवं भविष्यकाल स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३५)।

4/35. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself in all the dimensions of time and space—the past, the present and the future. In other words, there is not a single moment when Lord Ram as the cosmic Consciousness is not present in this world. [This implies that though the Lord’s worldly sojourn had ended when he left this earth for his heavenly abode as described in all the Purans and the epic Ramayana as well as in the Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 9, he continuous to live amongst us at each moment of our lives.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/35).

४/३६. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च ब्रह्माण्डस्यान्तर्बहिर्योऽप्योति विराड् भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yodbrahmāṇḍasyāantarbahirvyāptam
virāḍa bhūrbhuvah svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/36 //

[४/३६. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यद्ब्रह्माण्डस्य बहिव्याप्तम् भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै
नमो नमः ।]

[Another version: om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yadbrahmāṇḍasya
bahirvyāptam bhūrbhuvah svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/36 //]

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं।
वे विराट परमेश्वर स्वरूप इस ब्रह्माण्ड के भीतर एवं बाहर सब जगह व्याप्त हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म
तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही
मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३६)।

4/36. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram, in his form as the Viraat Purush¹, who pervades uniformly throughout this universe and encloses it from all sides. He is present inside as well as outside this creation, being all-pervading, omnipresent and all-encompassing.

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/36).

[^The Viraat Purush— The Viraat Purush, according to metaphysics, is the gross body of the creation and it is this body which is the source from which the rest of the cosmos was moulded or created or manifested. That is, the entire creation, both visible and invisible, is a manifested or revealed form of this Viraat Purush.

Purush has been defined in Brihad Aranyak Upanishad, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18 explicitly as the cosmic all-pervading macrocosmic form of the Supreme Being, called the Viraat Purush, who had entered each and every body of all the creatures and had taken up his residence there. According to the Aiteriyo Upanishad of Rig Veda, Canto 1, verse nos. 3, the supreme Brahm created the vast universe and his image in the form of the Viraat Purush, and the Gods were created from this Viraat—Canto 1, verse no. 4. When the mortal world consisting of the visible world was created, the human body was considered as the best image of the Viraat Purush, and thus all these Gods took up their residence in it—Canto 2, verse nos. 3-5.

The Mundak Upanishad of Atharva Veda, in its Canto 2, section 1, verse nos. 9-10 clearly affirm that it is the Viraat Purush, the macrocosmic all-pervading gross body of the supreme transcendental Brahm, that resides in the body of all living beings as their Atma.

The Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, in its Canto 3, verse no. 2, clearly states the supreme Lord resides in this creation as its Atma and Pran.

According to reverend Sankracharya's commentary on Katho-panishad, Canto 1, Valli 3, verse no. 11 and Canto 2, Valli 1, verse no. 12, the word Purush refers to that supreme entity which uniformly pervades in and completely fills everything that exists. It also refers to one who resides inside any place and completely owns that place. Therefore, this word Purush refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm who has taken up residence in the gross body of the creature at the micro level and in the Viraat Purush at the macro level. This Brahm pervades throughout them in a uniform way even as the sky and the wind element occupy all available space in the creation. That is also why sky is considered as a nearest analogy of Brahm because even the other all-pervading element, the wind/air, is present in it and not outside of it.

The Viraat Purush is the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme transcendental Consciousness known as Brahm. The counterpart of the Viraat Purush at the microcosmic level of creation is the Man or the Purush. The Man is an image of the Viraat Purush.

According to Vedanta, the Viraat is the sum total of all the gross bodies in the creation at the macrocosmic level. [Refer—The Tripadvibhut Maha Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 10-11.] The individual gross body of the creature is the microcosmic form of that Viraat, because the entire creation is a manifestation of the same Viraat, it is an image of Viraat. According to the Purans, Viraat is known as Lord Vishnu. Since the Viraat is the male aspect of creation and the primary source of life, Vishnu is also regarded as the creator as well as the sustainer of the creation. But since Vishnu, as Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, he is also regarded as being synonymous with Brahm.

The entire universe has been created by Vishnu's passive powers using Shakti as its active power and partner. The word 'Viraat' refers to something that is vast, colossus, immeasurable, fathomless and infinite; something that is beyond all terrestrial yardsticks and measurements. The supreme Lord encloses the entire creation from all the sides like an envelop, and at the same time he remains uniformly and inseparably present throughout it like salt which has been dissolved in water.

At the time of creation, the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, and Vishnu the sustainer, had all emerged from the Viraat Purush. According to Purans, this Viraat and Lord Vishnu are the same divine factors of creation. The subtler form is known as Viraat, while its grosser form is Vishnu—though the terms 'subtle and gross' are only relative and for the purpose of understanding, because both are the same indivisible Brahm who is non-dual and immutable.

The word Purush according to metaphysics refers to the primary and supreme creator of creation known as the Viraat Purush who represents the macrocosmic gross Male body or aspect of the cosmos and is the first macrocosmic gross revelation of Brahm. Ultimately, this Brahm is the Supreme Being who has revealed himself as the Viraat Purush. The creation unfolded from this Purush when he metamorphosed as the gross body of the entire creation, visible and invisible. Therefore, he is the sum-total of all the gross bodies of all the creatures taken together in this creation at the macrocosmic level, and it is from his macrocosmic body that the entire creation was moulded. In other words, the Viraat Purush represents the entire spread of the cosmos. At the micro level of the world, the individual creature is the counter part of Viraat Purush. In other words, the individual gross body of the creature is the microcosmic

form of that Viraat, because the entire creation is a manifestation of the same Viraat; it is an image of Viraat.

Literally, the word ‘Purush’ means someone who resides in a body. [Refer Brihad Aranyak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda, Canto 2, Brahman 5, verse no. 18.] Here the body is the gross forms of the various entities of creation in which the Viraat Purush, as the cosmic manifestation of the supreme Brahm or cosmic Consciousness took up residence at the time of creation, and does so since that time. When the creation would finally wind up, this Viraat would revert back to his original form as the invisible Brahm or the cosmic Consciousness. An entire Sukta in the Rig Veda, 10/19 is dedicated to this Viraat Purush

In the Purans, he is also known by other names, such as Vishnu, the sustainer. Since the Viraat is the male aspect of creation and the primary source of life, Vishnu is also regarded as the creator as well as the sustainer of the creation. But since Vishnu, as Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, he is also regarded as being synonymous with Brahm. The entire universe has been created by Vishnu’s passive powers using Shakti as its active power and partner. The word ‘Viraat’ refers to something that is vast, colossus, immeasurable, fathomless, and infinite and beyond all terrestrial yardsticks. The supreme Lord encloses the entire creation from all sides like an envelop, and at the same time he remains uniformly and inseparably present throughout it like salt which has been dissolved in water. At the time of creation, the Trinity Gods, i.e. Brahma the creator, Shiva the concluder, and Vishnu the sustainer, had all emerged from the Viraat Purush. According to Purans, this Viraat and Lord Vishnu are the same divine factors of creation. The subtler form is known as Viraat, while its grosser form is Vishnu—though the terms ‘subtle and gross’ are only relative and for the purpose of understanding, because both are the same indivisible Brahm who is non-dual and immutable.

The Viraat Purush is also the creator of this world as pointed out in Canto 2, paragraph 11 of Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad, and the former is also entitled to be called Brahma the creator. It must be carefully noted that the difference lies in the level or plane of creation in which a particular entity is being considered for study.

The cosmic form of the Viraat Purush has been described in the Tripadvibhut Maha Naryan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, Canto 2, paragraph no. 11; and Canto 6, paragraph no. 11.]

४/३७. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यो हिरण्यगर्भः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yo hiraṇyagarbhaḥ bhūrbhuvah
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/37 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे हिरण्यगर्भ (ब्रह्मा एवं विष्णु) के स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३७)।

4/37. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who had revealed himself as the Hiranyagarbha¹. [The ‘Hiranyagarbha’ is the cosmic egg from which the rest of the creation, including the Viraat Purush referred in verse no. 4/36 above, have emerged. It is the sum total of all subtle bodies of creation at the macrocosmic level of creation. Another name of Hiranyagarbha is ‘Brahma the creator’. In other words, it is Lord Ram who is none else but the supreme transcendental Brahm personified, and it is from him that both the cosmic egg known as Hiranyagarbha at the most subtle level of creation, and a more grosser form of it known as Brahma the creator had emerged at the very initial stages of creation.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/37).

[¹Hiranyagarbha—It is the macrocosmic subtle body of Brahm, so called because it is akin to the cosmic golden egg lying in the womb of Brahm from which emerged the Viraat Purush, the gross body of Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. The word Hiranyagarbha has two components—‘Hiranya’ meaning yellow, and ‘Garbha’ meaning the womb. Hiranyagarbha was the primordial cosmic fertilised egg, deriving its name from the fact that its yolk core was yellow and glowing with an incandescent light like the one radiating out from the splendorous Sun in the sky, called the Maartand.

There are different versions regarding this Hiranyagarbha. According to the concept of Vedanta, Brahm is the cosmic supreme and transcendental Consciousness residing in the macrocosmic causal body called the Ishwar. In this context, when Brahm decided to reveal or unfold this creation, first the causal body known as a Ishwar developed the macrocosmic subtle body called the Hiranyagarbha, and from this evolved the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm called the Viraat Purush. This is the picture at the macrocosmic level. All these three sublime bodies of Brahm at the cosmic level—viz. Ishwar, Hiranyagarbha and Viraat Purush—were invisible, subtle, unqualified, without any attributes, all-inclusive and all-pervading. It was the unrevealed form of Brahm. But that was just the beginning.

When this visible world was created, which had attributes and qualifications, the same macrocosmic units of Brahm metamorphosed themselves into their respective counterparts in the individual creature’s body. Hence, Ishwar is represented by the Pragma or the individual’s causal body, Hiranyagarbha is represented by the Taijas or the individual’s subtle body, and the Viraat Purush is represented by the Vishwa or the individual’s gross body.

These three bodies are the three states in which consciousness exists, both at the macrocosmic level as well as the microcosmic level. At the microcosmic level, the Pragma relates to the deep sleeper state of consciousness called the Sushupta state, the Taijas relates to the dreamer state of consciousness called Swapna state, and the Vishwa relates to the waking state of consciousness called Jagrat state. The three corresponding states at the macrocosmic level are the Ishwar which relates to the cosmic deep sleep state of Consciousness called cosmic Sushupta, the Hiranyagarbha

which relates to the cosmic dreamer state of Consciousness called cosmic Swapna, and the Viraat Purushh which relates to the cosmic waking state of Consciousness called cosmic Jagrat.

According to Purans, the Hiranyagarbha refers to the Brahma the creator, as well as to the Viraat Purush because Brahma was born atop a lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu who is no one else but the Viraat Purush. If the word 'Hiranyagarbha' is to indicate the cosmic egg, then it was from this egg, lodged in the womb-like navel of Vishnu, that Brahma emerged. Hence, the 'original creator' was not Brahma but the Viraat Purush as Vishnu, and therefore the latter is the Hiranyagarbha—the golden cosmic egg. So we conclude that Hiranyagarbha essentially refers to the cosmic egg from which the rest of the creation evolved. Since Brahma is said to be the great grandfather of this creation, he is aptly named Hiranyagarbha, i.e. the cosmic egg from which this visible and gross form of creation evolved.

This concept of Hiranyagarbha being produced from the body of the Supreme Being called Narayan or Ishwar have been elaborately dealt with in Maho-panishad, Canto 1, verse no. 8 of the Sam Veda tradition. The same idea is reiterated in the Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12, and Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-14 in the context of genesis of creation which addresses the primordial Lord as 'Adi-Narayan' or the Lord who preceded this creation.

The Hiranyagarbha is very subtle like the mind-intellect of the creature. The mind-intellect is also called the subtle body because it is through this mind-intellect that the Atma of the individual creature creates this world by using the mind's stupendous ability to imagine, envision and conceptualise things, and then using the intellect to justify it to be true, real and logical. But this instrument of the mind-intellect is invisible, is so subtle and hidden from view that its presence is only deduced by its astounding potentials which are manifested in the form of the gross body and its own stupendous capabilities. Whatever the mind wishes to do, it gets it done by the body.

There is another connotation to this observation. Since the mind is the creator of the world by its power of imagination, and then sustaining or perpetuating its own creation by believing in the truthfulness and reality of the world, it is therefore the mind itself that can conclude this world. So, while it is like Brahma the creator, it is also like Vishnu the sustainer and protector, and Shiva the concluder. If the same mind can assume three roles, it is not incongruous to believe that the same Hiranyagarbha is Brahma and Vishnu simultaneously. Since Shiva is a synonym used for the supreme transcendental Brahm—because the word 'Shiva' stands for an entity that is truthful, beautiful, auspicious, divine and holy as affirmed by a number of Upanishads of the Krishna Yajur Veda tradition that deal with the 'Shiva Tattwa', this Hiranyagarbha is also Shiva.

The word 'Hiranyagarbha' has two components—'Hiranya' meaning yellow, and 'Garbha' meaning the womb. Hiranyagarbha was the primordial cosmic fertilized egg deriving its name from the fact that its yolk-core was yellow and glowing with an incandescent light like the one effusing from the splendorous Sun in the sky, called the Martand. It was lodged in the womb-like navel of the Viraat Purush. It also resembled the musk deer in the sense that musk spreads its fragrance everywhere but it is not visible because it is hidden in the abdomen of the deer. Similarly, this Hiranyagarbha had spread its glory, radiance and splendour through the length and breath of the void of the cosmos, but was not visible itself.

This Hiranyagarbha is like the musk present in the body of the musk deer. The deer is not able to see the musk but is nevertheless maddened by its perfume, running mad in search of the source of the perfume not knowing that it is hidden well inside its own body. Similarly, the creature is unaware that the supreme Brahm is residing in his own bosom as the pure consciousness called the Atma while he spends his entire life searching for it everywhere in the outside world.

Hiranyagarbha is called Maartanda, the Sun, because of its golden colour and brilliance like the golden yellow and brilliant disc of the sun in the sky. Like the light of the sun illuminates the world and brings everything in it to light or knowledge, the Hiranyagarbha too brings to the fore the intentions of Brahm by revealing this vast creation. The Hiranyagarbha had spread the sacred divinity, the stupendous glory, the dazzling radiance and the brilliant splendour through the length and breath of the vast realm of the cosmos like the sun spreading its glory on the earth by way of its energy, light, heat and warmth.

The word ‘Hiranyam’ also refers to ‘Amrit or elixir or nectar of eternity and bliss’; it also means ‘green’. That is why greenery is associated with fertility, vibrancy, life and abundance of food and plentiful vegetation. The trees are green, and their precursor, the algae and moss, were also green. Indeed the food is the elixir of life in the world—nothing can ever survive without food and water. So, ‘Hiranyagarbha’ first created these to initiate the process of creation, and then sustained them once the process got under way. The ‘Viraat Purush’ as well as the ‘Hiranyagarbha’ are both used often synonymously to indicate the macrocosmic forms of the Male aspect of creation whose female counterpart is called ‘Nature’ or Shakti. The Shakti is the dynamic aspect of Brahm’s creative powers and an effective method of displaying the Lord’s cosmic authority.

The concepts of ‘Viraat’ and ‘Hiranyagarbha’ are inter-related as the latter refers to the subtle body of Brahm and the former refers to the gross body of Brahm at the macrocosmic level of creation. They have their origin in the supreme Brahm called ‘Adi-Narayan’. This concept has been elaborately explained in the Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda, Canto 2, paragraph nos. 9-12, and Canto 3, paragraph nos. 7-14 in the context of genesis of creation.

The terms ‘Viraat’ and ‘Hiranyagarbha’ must be clearly understood to avoid confusion because they are used for both Brahma as well as Vishnu. The term ‘Viraat’ means anything of colossus dimensions and nature, something that is vast and infinite. The Viraat Purush is the gross body of the Supreme Being known as Brahm from which the rest of creation emerged—refer Canto 2, paragraph 10-11 of Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad of Atharva Veda. This Viraat has his roots in the cosmic egg in which the subtle body of Brahm took shape as the cosmic embryo, called the Hiranyagarbha—refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza no. 1 of the same Upanishad. The latter is so-called because it was hidden in the cosmic womb (‘Garbha’), and like the yellow-coloured yolk of the egg it was radiant and golden (‘Hiranaya’) in colour. It was from this cosmic embryo called the Hiranyagarbha that the creation emerged, including the Viraat Purush, hence it is called ‘Brahma the creator’. Refer Canto 2, paragraph 12, stanza 1 of Tripadvibhut Maha-Narayan Upanishad.]

४/३८. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् या प्रकृतिः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yā prakṛtiḥ bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/38 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं।
वे प्रकृति स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो
ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३८)।
स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार
नमस्कार है (३८)।

4/38. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the 'Prakriti'¹. [The word 'Prakriti' refers to Nature in its macrocosmic dimension. This Prakriti forms the primary nature of the individual creature. It is the driving force that impels the creature to do something in a particular way and also decides his natural habits, temperaments, tendencies, desires and aversions etc. At the cosmic level, it is the womb in which the entire creation conceived by the Supreme Being was nourished and developed till it took its shape in the form of the visible world. Hence, this verse means that it is Lord Ram playing out his cosmic role as the Mother who would nourish the creation in her cosmic womb as well as give the would-be creation its characteristic personality by shaping its nature, inclinations, temperaments, desires and aversions, its Vasanas (passions) and Vrittis (natural tendencies) etc.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/38).

[¹Prakriti—The word 'Prakriti' basically means 'nature', but there are different hues of meaning to it. The Chambers dictionary defines it as the power that creates and regulates the world; the power of growth; the established order of things; the cosmos; the external world especially that untouched by man; the inherent qualities in anything that makes it what it is; the essence; the being; the constitution; a kind or order; naturalness; normal feeling; conformity to truth or reality; the inborn mind; the character, instinct or disposition; the vital power; the course of life; the nakedness of truth; the primitive undomesticated condition; the strength or substance of anything; a deity personifying some force of physical nature.

Sir Monier Monier-Williams, in his encyclopedic Sanskrit-English dictionary describes it thus—'making or placing before or at first'.

So, the word Prakriti has many connotations, viz. the original or natural or basic form or condition of anything; the original or primary nature, character, condition, constitution, temperament, disposition; the fundamental form or shape or essence or pattern or standard or model, rule; Mother Nature which has the active physical natural forces that are responsible for unfolding the creation, its sustenance and annihilation; something that is inherent, innate, genuine, unaltered, unadulterated, basic, normal, bare, naked, crude, integral and stripped of all pretensions; the

fundamental pattern, form, standard and model upon which the rest of the things are based; the crude or basic or root or seed form of any word, and by extension of anything expressed; that which decides the existential mode of anything; the coefficient, the multiplier of any fundamental element.

As inherent nature and temperament of a creature, it determines the way the world behaves and thinks; it determines the basic character of the creature and the creation as a whole because the individual creature is but a single unit of the creation. It ought to be noted here that the concept of Prakriti is intricately woven into the fabric of creation and conforms to both the views of Avyakta (un-manifest) and Vyakta (manifest). At the subtle level, Prakriti is Avyakta, while at the gross level it is Vyakta. The word would also therefore have two applications.

The word Prakriti also refers to the 'personified will of the Supreme Being in the creation', and it therefore is synonymous with the powers of the Supreme Being personified as Mother Nature in whose womb the entire creation has revealed itself. It is deified forces of Nature and revealed as different renowned and powerful Goddesses.

The Prakriti represents the cosmic creative will of the creator that has revealed itself as the primary female aspect of creation which is known as 'Shakti', while its male aspect is known as the 'Viraat Purush'. The Shakti is the active ingredient or force that creates and regulates everything, while the primary entity or Being whose will this Shakti is implementing is called Brahm who remains passive.

According to the Purans, this Prakriti or Nature has been personified as different Goddesses, while Brahm has been known as Viraat Purush in the terminology of Vedanta or the Upanishads, and Vishnu in the Purans. The Shakti is the female aspect of Purush, and is considered as inseparable from him; in fact they are two halves of the same Brahm. In order to create, Brahm revealed himself in these two primary forces which revealed themselves as the cosmos or Nature. As the different inherent tendencies of a creature, the forces of creation came to be known as Sattva, Raj and Tam which determines and regulates the continuous cycle of creation, sustenance and conclusion. The Purush is the male aspect while his female counterpart is the Prakriti. Since a man resides in this world, he is surrounded by Nature which casts its shadow upon him. All the maverick tricks that Mother Nature knows create an impression upon a man. He is enthralled and so overwhelmed by the deception created by Nature that he forgets about the falsehoods of what he sees, as well as about the truthful nature of his own pure self. He is deluded by false impressions so much so that they appear to be true to him. Consequentially, he drifts along in the swift currents created by those delusions. He acquires the colours of Prakriti without realising the truth about its falsehood.

According to Sankhya Shastra, Prakriti is the original producer of the material world consisting of the three Gunas or fundamental qualities that are inherent in all the creatures and they decide the character and temperament of that creature depending upon the dominance of one quality over the other two. These three Gunas are—(i) 'Sata', or those which are auspicious and righteous and noble, (ii) 'Raja', or worldly qualities marked by such notions as having passions, desires, greed etc. and (iii) 'Tama', or those qualities that are 'dark' by nature, such as those that are categorised as sinful and pervert, leading to a creature's moral downfall.

The word Prakriti refers to the following—(a) Mother Nature and (b) the natural habits, temperaments and inclinations of a person. The Purush is the male aspect while his female counterpart is the Prakriti. Since a man resides in this world, he is surrounded by Nature which casts its shadow upon him. All the maverick tricks

that Mother Nature knows create an impression upon a man. He is enthralled and so overwhelmed by the deception created by Nature that he forgets about the falsehoods of what he sees, as well as about the truthful nature of his own pure self. He is deluded by false impressions so much so that they appear to be true to him. Consequentially, he drifts along in the swift currents created by those delusions. He acquires the colours of Prakriti without realising the truth about its falsehood.

The term has been described in the Niralambo-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, verse no. 6. The Paingalo Upanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, in its Canto 1, verse no. 3 describes how Prakriti came into being and how its three basic characteristics of Sata, Raja and Tama Gunas represented by three primary colours of white, red and dark metamorphosed into the myriad character traits that would mark the creation and its inhabitant creatures when the creation would eventually come into being.

The Saraswati Rahasya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajur Veda, in its verse nos. 47-49, describe very succinctly and clearly the concept what Maya (the dynamic powers to creation delusions), Jiva (the individual creature; the living being), Ishwar (the supreme Lord God; the Supreme Being), Prakriti (Nature) and Jagat (the manifested world; creation).

The Shwetashwatar Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, in its Canto 4, verse no. 10 describes the relationship between Prakriti, Maya and Gunas in a very succinct manner.

The Garbha Upanishad, in its paragraph no. 3 outlines the eight Prakritis or nature of a creature.

The various Vikaars or faults, imperfections, shortcomings, taints, blemishes and corruptions that mire the inherent character and nature of Prakriti or Nature at the macrocosmic level of creation have been enumerated in Shaarirako Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda, verse no. 17.]

४/३९. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्चोद्धारः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaścoṅkāraḥ bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/39 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे ओंकार (ॐ) स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (३९)।

4/39. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the ‘OM or Omkar’¹. [OM is the monosyllabic word standing for Brahm. Everything that exists is said to be incorporated in this single word. It is the Tarak Mantra as well. Hence, this verse implies that OM refers to Lord Ram as much as it is meant to refer to Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness. OM and the RAM are synonymous words—refer Ram Purva

Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2-3; and Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2; Canto 3, verse nos. 1-4 and the first half of verse no. 5.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/39).

[¹OM—It is the ethereal Mantra dedicated to the supreme Brahm. It is the primary sound from which the rest of the creation evolved as it provided the basic energy needed to start the process of change in the cosmic ether by stirring the stagnant gel at the beginning of the process of creation. It is OM that is revealed in the form of all knowledge and their encrypted form as the Vedas and other scriptures. It is OM that has revealed in the form of the faculty of speech which helps not only in the dissemination of information but even enables the creature to express himself and let his desires be known. It is the Beej Mantra or the seed Mantra of Brahm and the word by which the supreme transcendental Brahm is known and identified. The three letters of OM, viz. A, U and M, are said to be representative of the three phases of creation—i.e. ‘A’ stands for the beginning of creation, ‘U’ for its development and expansion, and ‘M’ for its conclusion. The three letters of the name of Lord Ram—viz. R, A and M correspond to these three letters, and by extension to the three primary phases in creation as outlined above. The importance of OM in relation to Lord Ram has been explained in Canto 2, verse nos. 1-2; Canto 3, verse nos. 1-4 and the first half of verse no. 5 of this Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad. Refer also to Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2-3.

Ancient sages conceptualized the abstract divinity known as Brahm in the form of a word OM and then proceeded to explain the entire concept of creation, its development and its conclusion by analyzing this single word. In the present context, this verse means that OM not only refers to the supreme transcendental Brahm but also to Lord Ram in his cosmic form as the Supreme Being.]

४/४०. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् याश्चतस्रोऽर्धमात्राः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaścatastro’rdhamātrāḥ bhūrbhuvah
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/40 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे चार अर्द्धमात्रा स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (४०)।

4/40. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as the ‘four Ardha Maatraas’. [In other words, Lord Ram represents the four ‘Ardha Maatraas’. The Ardha Maatraas are the

half-syllables used in Sanskrit language, and are placed above, below, before and after an alphabet to give it a proper sound. This helps the concerned alphabet to acquire a proper form and gives a meaning to the word of which the alphabet with its Ardha Maatraas is a constituent part. This personification of Sri Ram as Ardha Maatraas symbolises the fact that without him the creation loses its meaning, glory and existence even as a word loses its meaning and impact without the alphabets having proper Ardha Maatraas.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/40).

[¹The Ardha Maatraas—In the context of OM, the Ardha Maatraa refers to a half-syllable placed at the end of the third letter ‘M’ of OM in the form of a ‘Halant’ or a mark of an oblique line placed below M. In the symbol of OM, it is represented by a horizontal ‘S’ sign placed to the right groove of the symbol which represents the long vowel sound of ‘Ooo’ in Sanskrit (like in boot). Normally, the letter ‘M’ of the word OM is to be hummed in a prolonged sound stretching into infinity. But since it is not done and the worshipper becomes silent, it is called ‘half Maatraa’ or half syllable. It is tantamount to conclusion of the word OM, and since OM is envisioned as representing the whole gamut of creation, this Ardha Maatraa is symbolic of conclusion of creation. That is why it is accompanied by the universal fire of destruction called the Samvartak Agni.

The Atharva-shikha Upanishad of the Atharva Veda tradition, in its Kandika 1 says that the Ardha Maatraa of OM represents the Moon God, the Mantras of the Atharva Veda, the Maruts (the Wind God), the Viraat Chanda and the Samvartak Agni. It is the fourth leg or Paad of Brahm and follows the third letter ‘M’ of OM.

The Tripadvibhūt Maha-Narayan Upanishad of the Atharva Veda, Canto 7, paragraph no. 68 says that Lord Vishnu represents the Ardha Maatraa.]

४/४१. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च परमपुरुषः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaśca paramapuruṣaḥ bhūrbhuvāḥ
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/41 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे परमपुरुष स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (४१)।

4/41. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who is a personification of the Supreme Being called the ‘Param Purush’. [The word ‘Param’ means ‘supreme and transcendental’, while ‘Purush’

means a 'male'. Hence, the phrase 'Param Purush' refers to the supreme, transcendental macrocosmic form of the Male aspect of Nature; the supreme Lord of creation; the Viraat Purush in his most subtle and sublime cosmic form known as the Adi-Narayan or Maha-Vishnu that exists beyond the known world.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/41).

४/४२. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च महेश्वरः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaśca maheśvaraḥ bhūrbhuvah
svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/42 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे महेश्वर (भगवान् शिव) स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (४२)।

4/42. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as 'Maheshwar'—the great Lord or the great Ishwar. [The word 'Mahesh' usually refers to Lord Shiva as he is regarded as the most wise and enlightened God in creation. The fact that Lord Shiva—or Maheshwar—is none else but Lord Ram in his form is also affirmed in verse no. 4/5 and 4/43. The word also means that Lord Ram is the Lord of all the Gods.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/42).

४/४३. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यश्च महादेवः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaśca mahādevaḥ bhūrbhuvah svastasmai
vai namo namaḥ // 4/43 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे महादेव (भगवान् शिव अथवा देवताओं में सर्वश्रेष्ठ) स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (४३)।

4/43. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

It is Lord Ram who has revealed himself as ‘Mahadev’—the great God. [The word ‘Mahadev’ is conventionally used for Lord Shiva as he is regarded as the senior most God amongst all the Gods because of his high degree of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment. Hence, this verse implies that it is Lord Ram himself who has manifested as Lord Shiva, the Lord known as Mahadev. Refer verse no. 4/5 and 4/42. The word also means that Lord Ram is the great God or Deva who is the senior most God amongst all the Gods.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/43).

४/४४. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् य ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय महाविष्णुः भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān ya om̐ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya
mahāviṣṇuḥ bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/44 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे ‘ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय’ इस द्वादश अक्षर मंत्र से प्रणाम करने योग्य भगवान् विष्णु स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (४४)।

4/44. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

Lord Ram is honoured and worshipped by the same twelve-lettered Mantra which is deemed fit and worthy to be used for honouring and worshipping the great Lord Maha-Vishnu, the Supreme Being. This eclectic Mantra is ‘om̐ namōḥ bhagavatē vāsudēvāya’. [This shows that Lord Ram and Lord Maha-Vishnu are the same divine entity. It is in accordance to the eclectic philosophy of Advaitya Vedanta or the principle of non-duality. Refer also to verse no. 4/5.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/44).

४/४५. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यः परमात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yaḥ paramātmā bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai
vai namo namaḥ // 4/45 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे परमात्मा हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (४५)।

4/45. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

Lord Ram is the 'Paramatma' or the supreme Atma or the supreme Lord God of creation. Refer also to verse no. 4/1-4, 4/7-8, 4/36.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/45).

४/४६. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवान् यो विज्ञानात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān yo vijñānātmā bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai
namo namaḥ // 4/46 //

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे विज्ञानात्मा स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (४६)।

4/46. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahman)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahman (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra 'OM'.

Indeed, he is 'Bhagwan' (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahman) himself personified.

Lord Ram is the 'Vigyan-Atma'—i.e. he is the personification of the pure Consciousness that is deemed to be all-knowing, enlightened, wise, omniscient, , sagacious and erudite. In other words, ignorance and delusions do not come within earshot of Lord Ram. This stanza might also be interpreted as to mean that Lord Ram is a personified form of Gyan (knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment) as well as Atma (pure consciousness and the 'true self' of all the living beings. Hence, Lord

Ram is Truth personified as Gyan and Atma are truthful. Refer verse no. 4/6, 4/8, 4/21-22.]

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/46).

४/४७. ॐ यो ह वै श्रीरामचन्द्रः स भगवानद्वैतपरमानन्दआत्मा । यः सच्चिदानन्दाद्वैतैकचिदात्मा भूर्भुवः स्वस्तस्मै वै नमो नमः ।

om̐ yo ha vai śrīrāmacandraḥ sa bhagavān dādvaitaparmānandātmā /

yaḥ saccidānandādvaitaikacidātmā bhūrbhuvāḥ svastasmai vai namo namaḥ // 4/47

//

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] ॐ जो जगत प्रसिद्ध श्रीरामचन्द्र हैं वे निश्चय ही भगवान् हैं। वे सच्चिदानन्द, अद्वैत परमानन्दआत्मा स्वरूप हैं। जो सर्वोत्कृष्ट ब्रह्म तथा भू, भुवः, स्वः — यह तीनों लोक हैं वह सब भी वो ही हैं। उन श्रीरामचन्द्रजी को निश्चय ही मेरा बारम्बार नमस्कार है (४७)।

4/47. OM salutations (or salutations to the supreme Brahm)! The most divine Lord Sri Ramchandra is none but the supreme transcendental Brahm (or the Supreme Being) who is addressed by the ethereal Mantra ‘OM’.

Indeed, he is ‘Bhagwan’ (the Lord God, the Supreme Being, the supreme transcendental Brahm) himself personified.

Lord Ram is non-dual, i.e. he is one and indivisible (adādvaita). He is the supreme Atma that is an embodiment of eternal bliss, beatitude and felicity (parmānandātmā).

Lord Ram is the eternal, non-dual Atma that is a personification of the virtues of ‘Sat, Chit and Anand’—i.e. he is truthfulness, consciousness and blissfulness personified (saccidānandādvaitaikacidātmā).

The three Lokas called Bhu, Bhuvaha and Swaha are nothing but the same divine Lord revealed in those forms.

I most reverentially and repeatedly bow before such a great and divine Lord known as Sri Ramchandra (4/47).

The spiritual benefits of repeating and invoking these Mantras are enumerated in the next verse no. 5, which says:--

५. इति तान्ब्रह्माब्रवित । सप्तचत्वारिंशन्मन्त्रैर्नित्यं देवं स्तुवध्वम् । ततो देवः प्रीतो भवति । स्वात्मानं दर्शयति । तस्माद्य एतैर्मन्त्रैर्नित्यं देवं स्तौति स देवं पश्यति । सोऽमृतत्वं च गच्छतिती महोपनिषत् ॥५॥

ityē tānbrahmābravīta / saptacatvāriṃśanmantrairnityaṃ devaṃ stuvadhvam /
 stato devaḥ prīto bhavati / svātmānaṃ darśayati /
 tasmādyā etairmantrairnityaṃ devaṃ stauti sa devaṃ paśyati /
 so'mṛtatvaṃ gacchatīti, so'mṛtatvaṃ gacchatīti // 3 //

iti pañcham kaṇḍikā sampāta

[Hindi/Vernacular Rendering =] जो ब्रह्मवेत्ता इन ४७ मंत्रों के अनुसार प्रतिदिन श्रीराम की उपासना करता है, स्तवन करता है उस पर वे प्रसन्न होते हैं। वह भगवान् का प्रत्यक्ष दर्शन करता है। वह अमृत तत्त्व को प्राप्त होता है। वह मुक्त होकर परमात्मा को प्राप्त होते हैं (३)।

श्रीरामोत्तरतापिनीयोपनिषद् का पञ्चम सर्ग समाप्त हुआ।

5. The erudite, sagacious, wise and enlightened person, who is deeply steeped and expert in the knowledge of Brahm and repeats these forty-seven divine and holy Mantras of Lord Ram daily, with due sincerity, consistency and devotion, in order to adore, worship and honour Lord Ram, is able to please the Lord very much and endear him.

The Lord gives such a person his divine vision; the worshipper is able to establish a direct connect with the Supreme Being, and is enabled to become self-realised inasmuch as he is able to see his true and real form (as the pure conscious Atma which is a synonym of Ram also).

A wise and enlightened person who worships the Lord daily in the way outlined herein above is forsooth able to have a divine vision of the Lord.

Such an exalted and fortunate person is able to taste the essence of eternity (blissfulness and beatitude) which is like divine nectar known as Amrit (or the elixir of eternal life).

In other words, such a wise, enlightened and self-realised and Brahm-realised person is able to obtain supreme, absolute and eternal bliss, happiness, beatitude and felicity for himself that accompanies spiritual evolvement. As a bonus, he gets liberation and deliverance from this world, and ensures emancipation and salvation for his soul. Such persons obtain oneness with the supreme Lord by merging their Atma with the supreme Atma of creation (5).

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(6.2) Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse nos. 43-63

Verse no. 43. == These Mantras are used to invoke the divine protective shield of Lord Ram's cosmic energy by touching various parts of the body while pronouncing the respective Mantras as follows:-

- (a) रं हृदयाय नमः == rāṁ hṛdayāya namaḥ (heart).
- (b) रीं शिरसे स्वाहा == rīṁ śirasē swāhā (head).
- (c) रूं शिखायै वषट् == rūṁ śikhāyai vaṣaṭ (top of head).
- (d) रें कवचाय हुम् == rēṁ kavacāya hum (body; arms).
- (e) रौं नेत्राभ्यां वौषट् == rauṁ nētrābhyāṁ vauṣaṭ (eyes; eyelids).
- (f) रः अस्त्राय फट् == raḥ astrāya phaṭ (the weapons one carries).

Verse no. 46. == ॐ नमो नारायणाय == oṁ namōḥ nārāyaṇāya.

[This Mantra means “Om salutations! I bow reverentially before Lord Narayan or Lord Vishnu who had manifested himself in a visible form as Lord Ram”. This is an eight-letter Mantra.

Here, “OM” stands for the Supreme Being known as Brahm, the pure cosmic Consciousness. Therefore, the worshipper offers his prayers to Lord Ram with the full understanding that he is worshipping Brahm and no one else. This applies to all the Mantras of Lord Ram where the monosyllabic word “OM ” is used as a prefix.]

Verse no. 47. == ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय == oṁ namōḥ bhagavatē vāsudēvāya.

[This Mantra means “Om salutations! I bow reverentially before Lord Vasudeo (i.e. Lord Vishnu who is the Lord of all the Vasus or elements of creation and its components that are of worth) who is dear to his devotees”. This Mantra has twelve letters.]

Verse no. 49. == ॐ ह्रीं भरताग्रज राम क्लीं स्वाहा == oṁ hrīṁ bhartāgraja rām klīṁ swāhā.

[This Mantra means “Om salutations! I bow most reverentially before the elder brother of Bharat (i.e. Lord Ram) as I make this offering to the fire sacrifice”. The esoteric words “hrīṁ” and “klīṁ” are virtually the code words that are used in formal forms of worship and offering of oblations to the fire to invoke the dynamic cosmic energy of the respective Gods. This Mantra has twelve letters.]

Verse no. 52. == रामभद्र महेश्वास रघुवीर नृपोत्तम। भो दशास्यान्तकास्माकं श्रियं दापय देहि मे
 == rāmbhadra mahēśvāsa raghvīra nr̥pōttama / bhō daśāsyāntakāsmākaṃ śriyaṃ
 dāpaya dēhi mē //

[This Mantra briefly means “Gentleman Ram is the Lord whom Shiva worships; he is the best amongst the kings and is a brave member of the family of King Raghu (of Ayodhya). The Lord had slayed the ten-headed demon (Ravana). Oh Lord—bless me with ‘Sri’ or all types of welfare, prosperity, success and accomplishments.” This Mantra has thirty-two letters.]

Verse no. 63. == This is called the ‘Mala Mantra’ of Sri Ram. It is as follows:-

ॐ नमो भगवते रघुनन्दनाय रक्षोघ्नविशदाय मधुर प्रसन्नवदनाय मिततेजसे बलाय रामाय विष्णवे नमः
 ==

OM Namaḥ/Namō bhagawatē raghunandanāya rakṣōghnaviṣṭadāya
 madhuraprasannavadanāyāmitatējasē balāya rāmāya viṣṇavē namaḥ”.

[Briefly this Mantra means “OM salutations! I bow reverentially before Lord Ram who is also known as Raghunandan (because he had manifested in the clan of king Raghu of Ayodhya). He is the protector from all troubles and remover of all hurdles. He is of a sweet temperament; is of a cheerful disposition; and is an embodiment of extreme Tej (splendour, radiance, glory and magnificence). He is strong, powerful and valiant. He is Vishnu, the Lord of Sri (Laxmi). It is to Lord Vishnu as Lord Ram, and vice versa, that I bow reverentially.”]

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(6.3) Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 5, verse no. 7

Verse no. 7 == The Mantra pronounced while offering the rewards of doing Japa to Sri Ram is the following—

गुह्याद्गुह्यस्य गोप्तात्वं गृहाणस्मत्कृतं जपम् । सिद्धिर्भवतु मे देव त्वत्प्रसादात्कृपानिधे ॥ ==

“guhyādmuhyasya gōptāttvaṃ gr̥hāṇasmatkṛtaṃ japam; siddhibharvatu mē dēva
 tvatprasādātkṛpānidhē.”

[The Mantra pronounced while offering the rewards of doing Japa of Lord Ram’s Holy Mantras to the Lord himself, selflessly. It briefly means “Oh Lord! I have been continuously repeating your holy name and as its reward have come to realise the eclectic secrets about you. I am offering all the efforts to you and request you to bless me with divine mystical powers and success in my spiritual endeavours.”]

According to some experts, the Mantra is as follows—

एवं भूतं जगदाधारभूतं रामं बन्दे सच्चिदानन्दरूपम् । गदरिशंखाब्जधरं भवारिं स यो ध्यायेन्मोक्षप्नोति
सर्वः ॥ ==

‘ēvaṃ bhūtaṃ jagadādhārbhūtaṃ rāmaṃ bandē sacchidānandarēpam,
gadāriśaṃkhābjadharaṃ bhavāriṃ sa yō dhyāyēnmōkṣapnōti sarvaḥ’.

[It means “I offer my respects and worship to Lord Ram who is the very basis and foundation of all the Bhuts or living beings in this creation. The Lord is an embodiment of truthfulness, consciousness and blissfulness. He holds a mace, a lotus, a conch and a discus. By meditating and contemplating upon this divine vision of the Lord (as Vishnu) one can find Moksha or spiritual liberation and deliverance, salvation and emancipation.”]

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(6.4) Ram Rahasya Upanishad, Canto 2, verse nos. 1-106

(1) Verse no. 1-2 == I letter Mantra (also called Tarak Mantra or the Mantra which can provide the ultimate emancipation and salvation to the soul—refer Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 2):-

रां == Rām.

(2) Verse no. 6 == 2 letter Mantra:-

राम == Rām/Raam.

(3) Verse no. 7-8 == 3 letter Mantra:-

- (a) ॐ राम == Om Rām.
- (b) ह्रीं राम == Hrīm Rām.
- (c) श्रीं राम == Śrīm Rām.
- (d) क्लीं राम == Klīm Rām.
- (e) ऐं राम == Aiṃ Rām.
- (f) रां राम == Rām Rām.

[Note: The monosyllabic prefixes used in these Mantras refer to the different aspects of the cosmic dynamic energy of Lord Ram and signify the Lord’s cosmic, all-powerful and all-pervading form. Thus, (i) OM = the Supreme Being known as

Brahm who stands of the pure cosmic Consciousness; (ii) Hrīm = stands for the ‘Maya Shakti’ element of creation. This represents the cosmic energy and divine powers of creation that create delusions. (iii) Śrīm = stands for the divine qualities which are like valuable assets for the aspirant. The word ‘Sri’ means all types of fortunes, wealth, prosperity, property, fame, splendour, magnificence, glory, well beings etc. (iv) Klīm = stands for ‘Kamdeo’ who is a manifestation of the cosmic force of Nature that creates natural desires, passions, volitions and yearnings. (v) Aiṃ = stands for the ‘Vaak Shakti’ or the power of speech and its patron Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of learning and wisdom. And (vi) Rām = this is the well-known Beej or seed Mantra of Lord Ram himself.]

(4) Verse no. 9 == 4 letter Mantra:-

- (a) रामचन्द्र == Rām Candra.
- (b) रामभद्र == Rām Bhadra.

(5) Verse no. 10-11 == 5 letter Mantra:-

रामाय नमः == Rāmāya Namaḥ.

(6) Verse no. 16 == 6 letter Mantra:-

- (a) रां रामाय नमः == Rām Rāmāya Namaḥ.
- (b) श्रीं रामाय नमः == Śrīm Rāmāya Namaḥ.
- (c) ह्रीं रामाय नमः == Hrīm Rāmāya Namaḥ.
- (d) ऐं रामाय नमः == Aiṃ Rāmāya Namaḥ.
- (f) क्लीं रामाय नमः == Klīm Rāmāya Namaḥ.
- (g) ॐ रामाय नमः == OM Rāmāya Namaḥ.

(7) Verse no. 17-18 == 6 letter Mantra:-

- (a) श्रीं राम चन्द्र श्रीं == Śrīm Rām Candra Śrīm.
- (b) श्रीं राम भद्र श्रीं == Śrīm Rām Bhadra Śrīm.
- (c) ह्रीं रामचन्द्र ह्रीं == Hrīm Rām Candra Hrīm.
- (d) ह्रीं रामभद्र ह्रीं == Hrīm Rām Bhadra Hrīm.
- (e) क्लीं राम चन्द्र क्लीं == Klīm Rām Candra Klīm.
- (g) क्लीं रामभद्र क्लीं == Klīm Rām Bhadra Klīm.
- (h) ऐं रामचन्द्र ऐं == Aiṃ Rām Candra Aiṃ.
- (i) ऐं रामभद्र ऐं == Aiṃ Rām Bhadra Aiṃ.
- (j) ॐ राम चन्द्र ॐ == Om Rām Candra Om.
- (k) ॐ रामभद्र ॐ == Om Rām Bhadra Om.
- (l) रां राम चन्द्र रां == Rām Rām Candra Rām.

(m) रां रामभद्र रां == Rām Rām Bhadra Rām.

(8) Verse no. 19 == 6 letter Mantra:-

- A---- (a) ॐ रामाय स्वाहा == Oṃ Rāmāya Svāhā.
 (b) श्रीं रामाय स्वाहा == Śrīṃ Rāmāya Svāhā.
 (c) क्लीं रामाय स्वाहा == Klīm Rāmāya Svāhā.
 (d) ह्रीं रामाय स्वाहा == Hrīm Rāmāya Svāhā.
 (f) ऐं रामाय स्वाहा == Aiṃ Rāmāya Svāhā.
 (g) रां रामाय स्वाहा == Rām Rāmāya Svāhā.

- B--- (a) ॐ रामाय नमः == Oṃ Rāmāya Namaḥ.
 (b) श्रीं रामाय नमः == Śrīṃ Rāmāya Namaḥ.
 (c) क्लीं रामाय नमः == Klīm Rāmāya Namaḥ.
 (d) ह्रीं रामाय नमः == Hrīm Rāmāya Namaḥ.
 (f) ऐं रामाय नमः == Aiṃ Rāmāya Namaḥ.
 (g) रां रामाय नमः == Rām Rāmāya Namaḥ.

- C--- (a) ॐ रामाय हुँ फट् == Oṃ Rāmāya Huṃ Phaṭ.
 (b) श्रीं रामाय हुँ फट् == Śrīṃ Rāmāya Huṃ Phaṭ.
 (c) क्लीं रामाय हुँ फट् == Klīm Rāmāya Huṃ Phaṭ.
 (d) ह्रीं रामाय हुँ फट् == Hrīm Rāmāya Huṃ Phaṭ.
 (f) ऐं रामाय हुँ फट् == Aiṃ Rāmāya Huṃ Phaṭ.
 (g) रां रामाय हुँ फट् == Rām Rāmāya Huṃ Phaṭ.

(8) Verse no. 25 == 7 letter Mantra:-

- (a) राम चन्द्राय नमः == Rām Candrāya Namaḥ.
 (b) राम भद्राय नमः == Rām Bhadrāya Namaḥ.

(9) Verse no. 26-28 == 8 letter Mantra:-

- (a) ॐ राम चन्द्राय नमः == Oṃ Rām Candrāya Namaḥ.
 (b) ॐ राम भद्राय नमः == Oṃ Rām Bhadrāya Namaḥ.
 (c) ॐ रामाय हुँ फट् स्वाहा == Oṃ Rāmāya Huṃ Phaṭ Svāhā.

(10) Verse no. 29-30 == 9 letter Mantra:-

ग्लौं ॐ ह्रीं नमः रामाय ग्लौं == Glaum Oṃ Hrīm Namaḥ Rāmāya Glaum.

(11) Verse no. 35-36 == 8 letter Mantra:-

ॐ श्री राम शरणं मम् == Oṃ Śrīrāmaḥ Śaraṇaṃ Mama.

[“Om salutations! I have taken refuge in the holy feet of Lord Ram.”]

(12) Verse no. 39 == 9 letter Mantra:-

ॐ श्री रामः शरणं मम् ॐ == Oṃ Śrīrāmaḥ Śaraṇaṃ Mama Oṃ.

(13) Verse no. 40-42 == 10 letter Mantra:-

जानकी वल्लभाय स्वाहा हुम् == Jānakī Vallabhāya Svāhā Hum.

[“I offer this offering to the fire sacrifice in the name of Lord Ram who is the dear husband of Janki or Sita”.]

(14) Verse no. 48-49 == 10 letter Mantra:-

रामाय धनुष्याणमे स्वाहा == Rāmāya Dhanuṣpāṇayē Svāhā.

[This Mantra briefly means “I offer my oblations to Lord Ram who holds a bow in his hand.”]

(15) Verse no. 50 == 11 letter Mantra:-

- (a) ॐ रामाय धनुष्याणमे स्वाहा == Oṃ Rāmāya Dhanuṣpāṇayē Svāhā.
- (b) ह्रीं रामाय धनुष्याणमे स्वाहा == Hrīṃ Rāmāya Dhanuṣpāṇayē Svāhā.
- (c) श्रीं रामाय धनुष्याणमे स्वाहा == Śrīṃ Rāmāya Dhanuṣpāṇayē Svāhā.
- (d) क्लीं रामाय धनुष्याणमे स्वाहा == Klīṃ Rāmāya Dhanuṣpāṇayē Svāhā.
- (e) ऐं रामाय धनुष्याणमे स्वाहा == Aiṃ Rāmāya Dhanuṣpāṇayē Svāhā.
- (g) रां रामाय धनुष्याणमे स्वाहा == Rāṃ Rāmāya Dhanuṣpāṇayē Svāhā.

(16) Verse no. 51-53 == 12 letter Mantra:-

- (a) ॐ ह्रीं भरताग्रज राम क्लीं स्वाहा == Oṃ Hrīṃ Bharatāgraja Rāma Klīṃ Svāhā.
- (b) ॐ रामाय धनुष्याणमे स्वाहा == Oṃ Hrīṃ Rāmāya Dhanuṣpāṇayē Svāhā.

[(a) “Om salutations! I make this offering to Lord Ram who is the elder brother of Lord Ram. Swaha!!”]

(b) “Om salutations! I make this offering to Lord Ram who holds a bow and an arrow in his hands. Swaha!!”]

(17) Verse no. 54-55 == 12 letter Mantra:-

(a) ॐ नमो भगवते राम चन्द्राय == Oṃ Namō Bhagawatē Rāma Candrāya.

(b) ॐ नमो भगवते राम भद्राय == Oṃ Namō Bhagawatē Rāma Bhadrāya.

[The meaning of these two Mantras are the following:- (a) “OM salutations! I most reverentially bow before Lord Ram who is as magnificent and divine as the Moon”; and (b) “OM salutations! I most reverentially bow before Lord Ram who is a thorough gentleman”.]

(18) Verse no. 56-57 == 13 letter Mantra:-

श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम == Śrī Rāma Jaya Rāma Jaya Jaya Rāma.

[This Mantra means—“Hail Lord Ram; Glory be to him; Cheers for Lord Ram; Hail the Lord; Glory be to the Lord.” This Mantra is like the king of all Mantras, and is used by wise ones.]

(19) Verse no. 58 == 14 letter Mantra:-

ॐ श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम == Oṃ Śrī Rāma Jaya Rāma Jaya Jaya Rāma.

[The meaning modifies a bit to mean “OM salutations! Hail Lord Ram; Glory be to him; Cheers for Lord Ram’. It also means this—‘Glory be to Lord Ram who is a manifestation of the supreme Brahm represented by the word OM; Glory be to him; Cheers for Lord Ram as a manifestation of OM.”]

(20) Verse no. 58 == 15 letter Mantra:-

श्री राम जय राम जय जय राम राम == Śrī Rāma Jaya Rāma Jaya Jaya Rāma Rāma.

(21) Verse no. 59-61 == 16 letter Mantra:-

नमः सीतापतये रामाय हन हन हुँ फट् ==

Namaḥ Sītāpatayē Rāmāya Hana Hana Huṃ Phat.

(22) Verse no. 62-63 == 17 letter Mantra:-

ॐ नमः सीतापतये रामाय हन हन हुँ फट् ==

Oṃ Namaḥ Sītāpatayē Rāmāya Hana Hana Huṃ Phat.

[This Mantra briefly means “OM salutations! I bow most reverentially before, pay my obeisance to, and honour the mystical powers and divinity of Lord Ram who is the husband of Sita.”]

(23) Verse no. 62-63 == 18 letter Mantra:-

ॐ नमो भगवते रामाय महापुरुषाय नमः ==

Oṃ Namō Bhagawatē Rāmāya Mahāpuruṣāya Namaḥ.

[This Mantra briefly means “OM salutations! I repeatedly bow most reverentially before, pay my obeisance to, and honour the mystical powers and divinity of Lord Ram who is the supreme Lord God and an exalted noble Purush (literally a great, a highly acclaimed and a noble gentleman).”]

(24) Verse no. 64-65 == 19 letter Mantra:-

क्लीं ॐ नमो भगवते रामाय महापुरुषाय नमः ==

Klīm Oṃ Namō Bhagawatē Rāmāya Mahāpuruṣāya Namaḥ.

(25) Verse no. 64-65 == 20 letter Mantra:-

ॐ नमो भगवते रामाय सर्व सौभाग्यं देहि मे स्वाहा ==

Oṃ Namō Bhagawatē Rāmāya Sarva Saubhāgyaṃ Dehī Mē Svāhā.

[This Mantra means “Oh Lord God Ram! I reverentially bow before you and pay my obeisance to you. Be kind to bless me with all welfares and good fortunes (‘Saubhaagya’). I offer my oblations to you.” An offering is to be made to the sacred fire with this Mantra by uttering the last word ‘Svāhā’.]

(26) Verse no. 66 == 21 letter Mantra:-

ॐ नमो भगवते रामाय सकलापन्निवारणाय स्वाहा ==

Oṃ Namō Bhagawatē Rāmāya Sakalāpannivārṇāya Svāhā.

[This Mantra briefly means “OM salutations! I reverentially bow before and pay my obeisance to Lord Ram who is the exalted God and a bestower of all desired fruits or rewards. I offer my oblations to you.” An offering is to be made to the sacred fire with this Mantra while pronouncing the last word ‘Svāhā’.]

(27) Verse no. 67 == 22 letter Mantra:-

ॐ श्री रां दाशरथाय सीतावल्लभाय सर्वाभीष्टदाय नमः ==

Om Śrīṃ Rām Dāśarathāya Sītāvallabhāya Sarvābhīṣṭadāya Namaḥ.

[The brief meaning of this Mantra is “OM salutations to Goddess Laxmi (‘Śrīṃ’) and Lord Ram (‘Rām’) in their cosmic form as Brahm! I reverentially bow before and pay my homage to Lord Ram who is the exalted son of king Dasarath and the dear husband of Sita, who is a fulfiller of all desires and wishes, and who grants the boon which bestows everything to his devotee.”]

(28) Verse no. 69 == 23 letter Mantra:-

ॐ नमो भगवते वीररामाय सकलशत्रुन् हन हन स्वाहा ==

Om Namō Bhagawatē Vīraṃrāmāya Sakalaśatrūn Hana Hana Svāhā.

[The brief meaning of this Mantra is “OM salutations! I reverentially bow before and pay my obeisance (‘Namo’) to Lord Ram (‘rāmāya’) who is brave and valiant (‘Vīraṃ’). Oh Lord! Destroy and crush (‘Hana’) all my enemies (‘Sakalaśatrūn’). I offer my oblations (‘Svāhā’) to you.” An offering is to be made to the sacred fire with this Mantra by uttering the word ‘Svāhā’.]

(29) Verse no. 73-74 == 24 letter Mantra:-

ॐ नमो भगवते श्री रामाय तारक ब्रह्मणे मां तारय नमः ॐ ==

Om Namō Bhagawatē Śrī Rāmāya Tārakabrahmaṇē Mām Tāraya Namaḥ Om.

[Briefly, this Mantra requests the Lord to bless the aspirant devotee with liberation and deliverance from this world and give his soul final emancipation and salvation. It means—“OM salutations! I bow before Lord Ram. You are the liberating Brahm personified. So be kind upon me and grant me the boon of liberation and deliverance, of emancipation and salvation.”]

(30) Verse no. 75-76 == 25 letter Mantra:-

क्लीं ॐ नमो भगवते रामचन्द्राय सकलजनवश्यकराय स्वाहा ==

Klīm Om Namō Bhagawatē Rāmacandrāya Sakalajanavaśyakarāya Svāhā.

[Briefly, this Mantra means “OM salutations! I reverentially bow and pay my obeisance to (‘Namo’) Lord God Ram Chandra who is the fulfiller of all wishes (as implied by the Kaam Beej Mantra ‘Klīm’). Empower me with mystical powers and charms so that I can exercise influence over and control all those with whom I come in contact, or whom I wish to bring under my command and control (‘Sakal-Jan-Vashya-Karaaya’). I offer my oblations to you (‘Svāhā’).” With this last word Svāhā, the worshipper should offer oblations to the sacred fire.]

(32) Verse no. 77 == 26 letter Mantra:-

ॐ क्लीं ॐ नमो भगवते राम चन्द्राय सकलजनवश्यकराय स्वाहा ==

Om Klīm Om Namō Bhagawatē Rāmacandrāya Sakalajanavaśyakarāya Svāhā.

[The first word ‘OM’ prefixed to the Kaam Beej ‘Klīm’ in this Mantra would obviously mean that the Supreme Being known as Brahm is the fulfiller of all wishes. When the rest of the Mantra is added to this part, the full meaning would be: “OM Salutations to the Supreme Being who is a fulfiller of all desired wishes of the worshipper, and it is he who has revealed himself in the person of Lord Ram. Let the Lord empower me to be able to exercise dominance over all others. I pay my obeisance to the Lord by offering oblations to the sacred fire by saying Svāhā.”]

(33) Verse no. 77 == 27 letter Mantra:-

ॐ क्लीं ॐ नमो भगवते राम चन्द्राय सकलजनवश्यकराय स्वाहा ॐ ==

Om Klīm Om Namō Bhagawatē Rāmacandrāya Sakalajanavaśyakarāya Svāhā
Om.

[The last ‘OM’ added as a suffix to the Mantra implies that when oblations are being made to Lord Ram with the word ‘Swāhā’, it is the supreme Brahm who is actually being worshipped in the form of Lord Ram, and that the Lord is none but the cosmic Consciousness in a personified form to which the worshipper is showing his respects when he prays to Lord Ram.]

(34) Verse no. 78-79 == 28 letter Mantra:-

ॐ नमो भगवते रक्षोघ्नविशदाय सर्व विघ्नान्तसमुत्सार्य निवारय स्वाहा ==

Om Namō Bhagawatē Rakṣoghnaviśadāya Sarvaviḡhnāntsamuccārya Nivāraya Svāhā.

[Briefly this Mantra means “OM salutations! I reverentially bow and pay my homage to the Lord God (Ram). Lord, be kind to protect me against all sorts of problems and hurdles in my endeavours. Eliminate all my miseries and causes of my misfortunes and torments. I offer this oblation to you for this purpose.” Then the worshipper makes offerings to the sacred fire with the word ‘Svāhā’.]

(35) Verse no. 78-79 == 29 letter Mantra:-

ॐ नमो भगवते रक्षोघ्नविशदाय सर्व विघ्नान्त्समुत्सार्य निवारय स्वाहा ॐ ==

Oṃ Namō Bhagawatē Rakṣoghnaviśadāya Sarvavighnāntsamuccārya Nivāraya Svāhā Oṃ.

[The last 'OM' implies that the worshipper salutes the Lord as a manifestation of the supreme Brahm because 'OM' is a Beej Mantra for Brahm. 'Brahm' is the Supreme Being and the cosmic Consciousness. Therefore, the obvious implication is that the offering to the sacred fire is meant for Brahm.]

(36) Verse no. 80 == 30 letter Mantra:-

रां ॐ नमो भगवते रक्षाघ्नविशदाय सर्व विघ्नान्त्समुत्सार्य निवारय स्वाहा ॐ ==

Rām Oṃ Namō Bhagawatē Rakṣoghnaviśadāya Sarvavighnāntsamuccārya Nivāraya Svāhā Oṃ.

[Here, the Beej Mantra 'Rām' put before OM implies that the very primary form of the Supreme Being known as Brahm is being addressed and honoured in this verse. Since the Beej Mantra 'Rām' pertains to the fire element as well as to Lord Ram, and it is followed by the Mantra for the supreme Brahm, which is 'OM', it obviously means that in this verse Lord Ram is being honoured not only as a manifestation of the supreme Brahm but also as the primary energy, the dynamism, the stupendous glory and the immaculate purity of Brahm personified in his divine form which is as glorious and radiant and pure as the Fire element. The rest of the meaning would be the same as for the twenty-nine lettered Mantra described in verse nos. 78-79.]

(37) Verse no. 80 == 31 letter Mantra:-

रां ॐ नमो भगवते रक्षाघ्नविशदाय सर्व विघ्नान्त्समुत्सार्य निवारय स्वाहा ॐ रां ==

Rām Oṃ Namō Bhagawatē Rakṣoghnaviśadāya Sarvavighnāntsamuccārya Nivāraya Svāhā Oṃ Rām.

[When 'Rām' is added as a suffix it implies that once again the oblations and homage are being paid to Lord Ram as a personification of the supreme Brahm represented by the Beej Mantra 'OM', as well as of the eternal cosmic Fire represented by the Beej Mantra 'Rām'. To wit, this means that Lord Ram is a personification of the Supreme Brahm, the cosmic Consciousness that is pure and glorious and splendorous as the Fire.]

(38) Verse no. 81-82 == 32 letter Mantra:-

रामभद्र महेष्वास रघुवीर नृपोत्तम भो दशस्यान्तकास्माकं श्रियंदापम देहि मे ==

Rāmabhadra Mahēśvāsa Raghuvīra Nṛpottama Bho Daśāsyāntakāsmākaṁ Śrīyaṁ
Dāpaya Dēhi Mē.

[The brief meaning of this Mantra is “The gentleman Ram is present in the breath of Lord Mahesh (i.e. Shiva constantly repeats his divine name Ram). He is the brave and valiant warrior of the clan of king Raghu, and is the most exalted and the best king of that clan. He had brought about the end of the ten-headed one (Ravana, the demon king of Lanka). He is endowed with all the magnificent, divine and sublime virtues and glories. Be kind to give me all kinds of ‘Śrī’ (i.e. bless me so that I can acquire all the majestic glories, fame, wealth and prosperity that are available in this world) as well as ‘Yam’ (exemplary self-control over the senses).”]

(39) Verse no. 86-87 == Ram Gayatri Mantra:-

ॐ दाशरथाय विद्महे सीतावल्लभाय धीमहि तन्नो रामः प्रचोदयात् ==

Oṃ Dāsarathāya Vidmahē Sītāvallabhāya Dhīmahī Tannō Rāmaḥ Pracodayāt.

[Briefly this Mantra means “OM salutations! The supreme Lord Ram is (in his human manifestation on earth is) the son of Dasrath, and the beloved husband of Sita. He is the best, the most exalted, a destroyer of sins, an excellent and a divine Being. May he infuse and inspire our intellect with wisdom and enlightenment so that we are purified and move forward on a path that is truthful, righteous and noble.”]

(40) Verse no. 88 == The Sammohan (hypnotizing) Mantra:-

ह्रीं क्लीं ॐ दाशरथाय विद्महे सीतावल्लभाय धीमहि तन्नो श्री रामः प्रचोदयात् ==

Hrīm Klīm Oṃ Dāsarathāya Vidmahē Sītāvallabhāya Dhīmahī Tannō Śrīṁ Rāmaḥ
Pracodayāt.

[When the two Beej Mantras ‘Hrīm’ and ‘Klīm’ standing jointly for ‘Maya Shakti’ and ‘Kaam Shakti’ (or the mystical powers that, when acquired, enables the person who has mastered this Mantra to be able to control other persons and make them absolutely obedient to him, as well as to fulfill all his desires) are added as a prefix to the ‘Ram Gayatri Mantra’, and the Beej Mantra ‘Śrīm’ (for ‘Sri’ or Goddess Laxmi, symbolizing the power of success and prosperity; the dynamic powers of the Lord) is added before the word ‘Rāmaḥ’ (which is the second last word of the Mantra, and stands for Lord Ram), then the resultant Mantra acquires ‘magical-charm’ properties that act as a hypnotizing instrument or a charm that can subdue one’s opponent, make him submissive, and make him obey one’s commands. It is therefore called a ‘Sammohan Mantra’.]

(41) Verse no. 90-92 == 47 letter Mantra (also called the ‘Mala Mantra’—see also Ram Purva Tapini Upanishad, Canto 4, verse no. 53-63):-

ॐ नमो भगवते रघुनन्दनाय रक्षोघ्नविशदाय मधुराय प्रसन्नवदनाय अमिततेजसे बलरामाय
विष्णवे नमः ==

Oṃ Namō Bhagawatē Raghunandanāya Rakṣoghnaviśadāya Madhurāya
Prasannavadanāya Amitatejasē Balarāmāya Viṣṇavē Namaḥ.

[Briefly, this Mantra means “OM salutations to Lord Raghunandan (Ram). He is a protector from all miseries and torments that afflict his devotees, and removes all their hurdles. He is of a sweet and pleasant demeanours and temperament. He appears cheerful and contented. He is immensely radiant with a divine splendour effusing as a glowing halo from his holy body. Lord Ram is strong, valiant, valorous, robust and brave. He is Lord Vishnu incarnate. I bow to him in great reverence.”]

(42) Verse no. 95-96 == Sita’s Mantra:-

श्रीं सीतायै स्वाहा == Śrīṃ Sītāya Namaḥ.

[The Mantra briefly means “I bow before goddess Sita.”]

(43) Verse no. 98-99 == Laxman’s Mantra:-

लं लक्ष्मणाय नमः == Laṃ Lakṣmaṇāya Namaḥ.

[The meaning of this divine Mantra is “I bow reverentially before Laxman to pay my respects to the divine Being whose Beej Mantra is ‘Laṃ’.”]

(44) Verse no. 101 == Bharat’s Mantra:-

भं भरताय नमः == Bhaṃ Bharatāya Namaḥ.

[The meaning of this Mantra is “I bow most reverentially before Bharat to pay my respects to the divine Being whose Beej Mantra is ‘Bhaṃ’.”]

(45) Verse no. 103 == Shatrughan’s Mantra:-

शं शत्रुघ्नाय नमः == Śhaṃ Śhatrugghanāya Namaḥ.

[This Mantra means “I bow most reverentially before Shatrughan to pay my respects to the divine Being whose Beej Mantra is ‘Śhaṃ’.”]

(46) Verse no. 105-106 == Lord Hanuman's Mantra:-

हं हनुमते नमः == Hṛṃ Hanumatē Namaḥ.

[The meaning of this Mantra is "I bow most reverentially before Hanuman to pay my respects to the divine Being whose Beej Mantra is 'Hṛṃ'."]

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(6.5) Ram Uttar Tapini Upanishad, Canto 2, verse no. 1

Verse no. 1 == The 'Tarak Mantras' of Lord Ram which have the divine potentials to provide the soul of the aspirant devotee with the unique opportunity to obtain liberation from the fetters that shackle it to this gross body and the perishable world of miseries and delusions, and deliver it from its torments, thereby bestowing it with the holistic benefit of emancipation and salvation, collectively called Moksha. These Mantras are the following:--

- (a) रां रामाय नमः == Rām Rāmāya Namaḥ.
- (b) राम चन्द्राय नमः == Rām Candrāya Namaḥ.
- (c) राम भद्राय नमः == Rām Bhadrāya Namaḥ.

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(6.6) Kali-Santaran Upanishad, verse no. 2

हरे राम हरे राम राम राम हरे हरे । हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे ।

harē rāma harē rāma rāma rāma harē harē / harē kṛṣṇa harē kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa harē harē.

[This Mantra was revealed to sage Narad by the Creator Brahma, also known as Hiranyagarbha. These 16 words have the potential of destroying all the great sins of Kaliyug and their effects. No other better method is visible (i.e. available, discernible, prescribed) in the 4 Vedas. That is, it is the simplest and the best medicine for all the ills of Kaliyug and it helps the creature to get easy deliverance from the myriad evils and miseries that torment it.

Lord Ram and Lord Krishna were both human incarnations of Lord Vishnu in different ages. This Mantra establishes that both these forms of Vishnu are the same,

possess the same powers to provide liberation and deliverance to the devotee, and have equal spiritual importance.]

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Glory of Lord Ram's Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras, Hymns & Prayers

[Roman Transliteration of Verses, English Exposition &
Explanatory Notes]

Chapter 7

Selected Prayers of Lord Ram

From the Book 'Vinai Patrika' of Goswami Tulsidas

In this Chapter we shall read some selected Prayers of Lord Ram from the excellent Book of Prayers called 'Vinai Patrika' written by the famous saint-poet of India, named Goswami Tulsidas. The first line of each verse is quoted below for easy reference.

(7.1) Verse no. 45—

śrī rāmacandra kṛpālu bhaju mana haraṇa bhavabhaya dāruṇam.

(7.2) Verse no. 66—

rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu bāvarē.

(7.3) Verse no. 79—

dēva-tū dayālu, dīna haum, tū dāni, haum bhikhārī.

(7.4) Verse no. 94—

kāhē tē hari mōhim bisārō.

(7.5) Verse no. 97—

jau pai hari janakē auguna gahatē.

(7.6) Verse no. 98—

aisī hari karata dāsapara prīti.

(7.7) Verse no. 99—

birada garībanivāja rāmakō.

(7.8) Verse no. 101—

jā'um kahām taji carana tumhārē.

(7.9) Verse no. 105—

abalaum̐ nasānī, aba na nasaihaum̐.

(7.10) Verse no. 114—

mādhava! mō samāna jaga māhīm̐.

(7.11) Verse no. 143—

sunahu rāma raghubīra gusā'īm̐, mana anīti-rata mērō.

(7.12) Verse no. 149—

kahām̐ jā'um̐, kāsōm̐ kahaum̐, aura ṭhaura na mērē.

(7.13) Verse no. 160—

mair̐m̐ hari patita-pāvana sunē.

(7.14) Verse no. 162—

aisō kō udāra jaga māhīm̐.

(7.15) Verse no. 164—

jānata prīti-rīti raghurā'ī.

(7.16) Verse no. 166—

aisē rāma dīna-hitakārī.

(7.17) Verse no. 174—

jākē priya na rāma-baidēhī.

(7.18) Verse no. 175—

jō pai rahani/lagana rāmasōm̐ nāhīm̐.

(7.19) Verse no. 179—

kahām̐ jā'um̐, kāsōm̐ kahaum̐, kauna sunai dīnakī.

(7.20) Verse no. 189—

rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu bhā'ī rē.

(7.21) Verse no. 198—

mana pachitaihai avasara bītē.

(7.22) Verse no. 204—

jō mana lāgai rāmacarana asa.

(7.23) Verse no. 208—

nātha sōm̐ kauna binatī kahi sunāvaum̐.

(7.24) Verse no. 211—

kabahum̐ raghubansamani! sō kṛpā karahugē.

(7.25) Verse no. 235—

aisēhi janama-samūha sirānē.

(7.26) Verse no. 242—

tumasama dīnabandhu, na dīna kō'u mōsama-----

(7.27) Verse no. 254—

rāma! rāvarō nāma mērō mātu-pitu hai.

(7.28) Verse no. 269—

rāma kabahum̐ priya lāgi hau jaisē nīra mīnakō?

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(7.1) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 45:

(45)

श्री रामचंद्र कृपालु भजु मन हरण भवभय दारुणं ।
 नवकंज-लोचन, कंज-मुख, कर-कंज, पद कंजारुणं ।।1।।
 कंदर्प अगणित अमित छवि, नवनील नीरद सुंदरं ।
 पट पीत मानहु तड़ित रुचि शुचि नौमि जनक-सुतावरं ।।2।।
 भजु दीनबंधु दिनेश दानव-दैत्यवंश-निकंदनं ।
 रघुनंद आनंदकंद कोशलचंद दशरथ-नंदनं ।।3।।
 सिर मुकुट कुंडल तिलक चारु उदारु अंग विभूषणं ।
 आजानुभुज शर-चाप-धर, संग्राम-जित-खरदूषणं ।।4।।
 इति वदति तुलसीदास शंकर-शेष-मुनि-मन रंजनं ।
 मम हृदय-कंज-निवास कुरु, कामादि खल-दल-गंजनं ।।5।।

(45)

śrī rāmacandra kṛpālu bhaju mana haraṇa bhavabhaya dāruṇam.
 navakaṇṇa-lōcana, kaṇṇa-mukha, kara-kaṇṇa, pada kaṇṇāruṇam. 1.
 kandarpa agaṇita amita chavi, navaṇīla nīrada sundaram.
 paṭa pīta mānahu taḍita ruci śuci naumi janaka-sutāvaram. 2.
 bhaju dīnabandhu dinēśa dānava-daitya-vaṇśa-nikandanam.
 raghunanda ānamḍakanda kōśalacanda daśaratha-nandanam. 3.
 sira mukuṭa kuṇḍala tilaka cāru udāru aṅga vibhūṣaṇam.
 ājānubhujā śara-cāpa-dhara, saṅgrāma-jita-kharadūṣaṇam. 4.
 iti vadati tulasīdāsa śaṅkara-śēṣa-muni-mana raṇṇanam.
 mama hṛdaya-kaṇṇa-nivāsa kuru, kāmādi khala-dala-gaṇṇanam. 5.

Verse no. 45—Oh mind! Concentrate on, think of and devote yourself to Lord Ramchandra, the merciful, the kind, the benevolent and the compassionate Lord! He is the one who can remove the grave fear of birth and death in this world. His eyes are

as beautiful as a newly blossomed lotus flower. His face, hands and feet are also like a red-tinged (pink) lotus. (1).

The beauty of his countenance is greater than innumerable Kamdeos (God of beauty and glamour) taken together. The complexion of his body has a blue tinge resembling rain-bearing dark clouds. The Pitambar (a yellow body-wrapping seamless cloth made of silk) is shining and simmering like lightening on his body, the complexion of which is compared with dark clouds. I offer my obeisance to and bow before the Lord of Janak-Suta (i.e. Lord Ram who is the divine husband of Sita, the daughter of Janak) who is a personification of auspiciousness and holiness. (2).

Oh my mind! Concentrate on, think of and devote yourself to (Lord Ram who is) a friend of the distressed and the humble, is as radiant, brilliant and splendorous as the sun, is a destroyer of the race of demons, evil spirits, ogres and Satan (representing evil and sinful creatures in creatures in this world), is the root of all joys and happiness, is symbolically like a moon which shines in the sky symbolizing the kingdom of Kaushal (Ayodhya). (3).

He has a crown that is studded with jewels and gems. He wears large ear-rings in his ears, an enchanting Tilak (religious mark) on his forehead, and beautiful jewelry on each part of his body. His arms are so long that they reach up to his knees. [Such long arms are regarded as auspicious for a king and indicate his long reach and extended influence. He is carrying a bow and an arrow. He has conquered the demons Khar and Dushan in the battle (i.e. he has conquered all the evil forces represented by them). (4).

He grants happiness and joys to the mind and heart of Lord Shiva, the mythical serpent-king known as Shesh, and great sages and hermits. He is the destroyer of enemies in the form of Kaam (lust, passions), Krodh (anger) and Lobha (greed, rapacity and avarice). Tulsidas prays that such a gracious and divine Lord Ram may always reside in his lotus-like heart. (5).

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(7.2) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 66:

(66)

राम जपु, राम जपु, राम जपु बावरे।
 घोर भव-नीर-निधि नाम निज नाव रे।।1।।
 एक ही साधन सब रिद्धि-सिद्धि साधि रे।
 ग्रसे कलि-रोग जोग-संजम-समाधि रे।।2।।
 भलो जो है, पोच जो है, दाहिनो जो, बाम रे।
 राम-नाम ही सों अंत सब ही को काम रे।।3।।

जग नभ—बाटिका रही है फलि फूलि रे।
 धुवाँ कैसे धौरहर देखि तू न भूलि रे।।4।।
 राम—नाम छाड़ि जो भरोसो करै और रे।
 तुलसी परोसो त्यागि माँगै कूर कौर रे।।5।।

(66)

rāma japu, rāma japu, rāma japu bāvarē.
 ghōra bhava-nīra-nidhi nāma nija nāva rē. 1.
 ēka hī sādhanā saba rid'dhi-sid'dhi sādhi rē.
 grasē kali-rōga jōga-sarjama-samādhi rē. 2.
 bhalō jō hai, pōca jō hai, dāhinō jō, bāma rē.
 rāma-nāma hī sōm anta saba hī kō kāma rē. 3.
 jaga nabha-bāṭikā rahī hai phali phūli rē.
 dhuvām̐ kaisē dhaurahara dēkhi tū na bhūli rē. 4.
 rāma-nāma chāḍi jō bharōsō karai aura rē.
 tulasī parōsō tyāgi mām̐gai kūra kaura rē. 5.

Verse no. 66—[Note :- The use of the Hindi word ‘rē’ as in *ray* at the end of each sentence indicates earnest and sincere plea by the loving teacher to convince a rather naughty, stubborn and reluctant disciple to mend his ways, and pay heed to what is being said, lest he would repent later.]

Oh you fool! Chant Ram's holy Name, I repeat—do it; for it is the only boat we have to ferry us across this worldly ocean (i.e. this is the easiest way to achieve salvation as it is easily available, simplest and accessible to all). (1).

You can master all virtues and knowledge with the help of this medium alone because Yoga (meditation and contemplation), self-control and self-restraint) and Samadhi (a state of meditative trance) etc. have been all eclipsed by the era of Kali (i.e. all other mediums for salvation or liberation of the soul have been over-shadowed or obscured by the evil presence of Kali, and therefore they aren't available). So, rely on his holy Name for your emancipation and salvation because it is still available. (2).

In the end, it (the holy Name of Ram) is the only hope for redemption for all of us whether it is bad or good, upside down or up (i.e. whether chanted backwards or forwards, willingly or unwillingly, with or without faith, conviction and belief—it will only do you good, rest assured about it). (3).

This world is like an illusion of a blossoming garden in the sky—it is a mirage, it is a delusion, it is something that is totally fake. All the materials and sense objects in this world are castles and palaces of smoke—here now and gone the next moment (i.e. don't go astray believing the world to be real—it is a total illusion, a mirage. So, focus your attention on the supreme reality). (4).

Tulsidas says that one who relies and depends on others, and not on the holy Name of Lord Ram, is like a fool who leaves the food in front of him and begs for it from

house to house like a dog. [That is, the medium of emancipation and salvation is in front of you—so why do you search for it somewhere else?] (5).

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(7.3) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 79:

(79)

देव—

तू दयालु, दीन हौं, तू दानि, हौं भिखारी।
हौं प्रसिद्ध पातकी, तू पाप—पुंज—हारी॥1॥
नाथ तू अनाथको, अनाथ कौन मोसो?
मो समान आरत नहिं आरतिहर तोसो॥2॥
ब्रह्म तू हौं जीव, तू है ठाकुर, हौं चेरो।
तात—मात, गुरु—सखा तू सब बिधि हितु मेरो॥3॥
तोहिं मोहिं नाते अनेक, मानियै जौ भावै।
ज्यों त्यों तुलसी कृपालु! चरन—सरन पावै॥4॥

(79)

dēva-

tū dayālu, dīna haum̐, tū dāni, haum̐ bhikhārī.
haum̐ prasid'dha pātakī, tū pāpa-puñja-hārī. 1.
nātha tū anāthakō, anātha kauna mōsō?
mō samāna ārata nahim̐ āratihara tōsō. 2.
brahma tū, haum̐ jīva, tū hai ṭhākura, haum̐ cērō.
tāta-māta, guru-sakhā tū saba bidhi hitu mērō. 3.
tōhim̐ mōhim̐ nātē anēka, māniyai jau bhāvai.
jyōm̐ tyaum̐ tulasī kṛpālu! carana-sarana pāvai. 4.

Verse no. 79—Oh Lord! If you are the one who is renowned for showing kindness, mercy and grace upon those who are humble, wretched, miserable and distressed, then surely I fit the bill as I am one such person. If you are a matchless and generous donor, then I am a beggar of the humblest kind. If I am a famous sinner, then you are the vanquisher and destroyer of all the treasures of sins. [Therefore, oh Lord, I qualify for your attention and grace; do I not?] (1).

If you are the Lord of the destitutes, then who is a greater destitute than me? There is no one as sorrowful, miserable and pitiful as me, and neither is there one greater than you who can eliminate sorrows and distress. (2).

You are Brahm (the supreme Soul known as the Parmatma, the immortal Lord of this creation) while I am a Jiva (a mortal living being).

You are the Lord, while I am a servant. What more, for me you are a mother, father, teacher, friend and benefactor by all means. (3).

Forsooth, it is therefore evident that we two (Lord Ram and Tulsidas) are related to each other in many ways. Whichever relation suits you, you treat me as such. But the thing is, oh merciful, this Tulsidas yearns to get refuge and shelter in your holy feet. [And I cite your reputation and invoke your gracious nature to plead with you not to turn me away.] (4).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, specially his devotees, in this verse.]

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(7.4) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 94:

Glory of Lord Śrī Rāma

(94)

काहे ते हरि मोहिं बिसारो ।
 जानत निज महिमा मेरे अघ, तदपि न नाथ सँभारो ॥1॥
 पतित-पुनीत, दीनहित, असरन-सरन कहत श्रुति चारो ।
 हौं नहिं अधम, समीत, दीन? किधौं बेदन मृषा पुकारो? ॥2॥
 खग-गनिका-गज-ब्याध-पाँति जहँ, तहँ हौँ बँठारो ।
 अब केहि लाज कृपानिधान! परसत पनवारो फारो ॥3॥
 जो कलिकाल प्रबल अति होतो, तुव निदेस तैं न्यारो ।
 तौ हरि रोष भरोस दोष गुन तेहि भजते तजि गारो ॥4॥
 मसक बिरंचि, बिरंचि मसक सम, करहु प्रभाउ तुम्हारो ।
 यह सामरथ अछत मोहिं त्यागहु, नाथ तहाँ कछु चारो ॥5॥
 नाहिन नरक परत मोकहँ डर, जद्यपि हौं अति हारो ।
 यह बड़ि त्रास दासतुलसी प्रभु, नामहु पाप न जारो ॥6॥

(94)

kāhē tē hari mōhim bisārō.

jānata nija mahimā mērē agha, tadapi na nātha sam̐bhārō. 1.

patita-punīta, dīnahita, asarana-sarana kahata śruti cārō.
 hauṁ nahiṁ adhama, sabhīta, dīna? kidhauṁ bēdana mṛṣā pukārō?. 2.
 khaga-ganikā-gaja-byādha-pāmṭi jahamṁ, tahamṁ haunhūṁ baiṭhārō.
 aba kēhi lāja kṛpānidhāna! parasata panavārō phārō. 3.
 jō kalikāla prabala ati hōtō, tuva nidēsa tēm n'yārō.
 tau hari rōṣa bharōsa dōṣa guna tēhi bhajatē taji gārō. 4.
 masaka birañci, birañci masaka sama, karahu prabhā'u tumhārō.
 yaha sāmāratha achata mōhiṁ tyāgahu, nātha tahāmṁ kachu cārō. 5.
 nāhina naraka parata mōkhamṁ ḍara, jadyapi hauṁ ati hārō.
 yaha baḍi trāsa dāsatalasī prabhu, nāmahu pāpa na jārō. 6.

Verse no. 94—Oh Lord Hari (Lord Sri Ram, who was an incarnation of Lord Hari, one of the many names of Lord Vishnu)! Why have you forgotten me?

Oh Lord! You are aware of my sins and misdemeanours on the one hand, and of your own reputation, fame and glory on the other hand. In spite of that, why don't you take care of me?¹ (1).

[¹The Lord has a reputation of being merciful and of taking care of even the most sinful and humble of creatures if the latter honestly prays to the Lord, seeking the Lord's protection while promising to change his evil ways. Not only this, the Lord is so gracious that if someone takes his shelter, the Lord ensures that the person changes his evil nature on his own by subtly influencing his mind and heart.

In this stanza, Tulsidas invokes this quality of Lord Ram and stresses that the Lord should be careful about acting in accordance with his famed reputation and his own words that he would afford protection to the most lowly and humble, the most sinful and wretched, if the latter prays to him and surrenders himself before the Lord. Otherwise, his immaculate reputation would be tarnished if he neglects Tulsidas and does not give solace and succour to him.

In the following stanzas, the stellar virtues and glories of Lord Ram which have made him so famous in this creation are enumerated in brief.]

Oh Lord, you are the one who purifies those who are tainted, those who are sinful, evil, vile and wicked; you make those who have countless faults into ones who are faultless (patita-punīta).

You are a benevolent benefactor and a selfless well-wisher of those who are unfortunate, distressed, lowly and humble; you think and act in their interest (dīnahita).

You provide refuge and shelter to them who have no refuge or shelter anywhere else (asarana-sarana).

These are facts that are affirmed by all the four Vedas (kahata śruti cārō). Then tell me, if this is the case, am I not eligible for your attention and mercy; am I not distressed, downtrodden, scared and sinful enough that I do not deserve your kindness and grace (for my salvation and deliverance)? (hauṁ nahiṁ adhama, sabhīta, dīna?).

Or else, is the assertion of the Vedas wrong; is their proclamation erroneous (kidhauṁ bēdana mṛṣā pukārō)? (2).

To start with, you had me sit along with the bird (vulture Jatau), Ganika¹ (the prostitute who attained salvation), the elephant (Gaja) and the hunter/bandit (named Valmiki).

[To wit, you have acknowledged that I am a sinner like one of them; you have equated me or treated me at par with them: “khaga-ganikā-gaja-byādha-pāmṭi jaham, taham haunhūm baithārō”.]

Now, oh merciful Lord, what hesitation or shame do you now have in providing me with the same benefit, the same mercy and grace that you bestowed upon them (aba kēhi lāja krpānidhāna)²?

[²To wit, first you accepted that you had provided the benefit of liberation, deliverance, peace and happiness to the above named entities who everyone knows were sinful, evil and lowly. Then you had also accepted that Tulsidas was no better than them—i.e. you treated Tulsidas at par with these sinful fellows. Now, if you can grant your mercy and grace upon these creatures on the ground that it is your very nature to provide succour and solace to those who are distressed and lowly, as well as to purify the impure and the sinful, then tell me oh Lord why are you not being equally graceful and merciful to Tulsidas? Verily oh Lord, I also expect the same treatment at your hands.]

Now therefore, once you have allowed me to sit alongside the above-named persons, why are you taking away the platter (i.e. the plate of leaves for partaking food in a community meal) put in front of me (parasata panavārō phārō)³?

[³Here, Tulsidas refers to the tradition of great Kings of inviting the poor and the humble for a community meal. In this metaphor, the benevolence, grace and spiritual rewards that the Lord bestowed upon the vulture Jatau, the prostitute Ganika, the elephant Gaja, and the hunter-turned great sage Valmiki is likened to the wonderful and delicious food served to them in this community meal. These creatures had never expected in their lives to ever taste the sweetness of freedom from a life of sins and vices which was like their daily staple food, but on this occasion they tasted the most delicious food of their lives, symbolised by the nectar-like sweetness that is inherent in attainment of spiritual bliss and deliverance from the horrors of this world.

Tulsidas says that he is no less sinful and lowly than them. And therefore, why is Lord Ram not granting him the same benefit as he had granted these four persons mentioned in this verse? Tulsidas reminds his Lord Ram that if he neglects the former, then it will have a negative effect on the Lord’s well known reputation of providing freedom from fear, freedom from sins and freedom from miseries to those who have sought refuge with the Lord even though they had been sinful and evil prior to seeking such refuge.

To wit, Tulsidas earnestly pleads with his beloved Lord Ram, saying: “Oh Lord, why are you depriving me of the benefit of having peace and happiness, of having liberation and deliverance from all worldly horrors and miseries, like you had provided these to the sinful and pervert fellows named by me? Am I worse than them, or am I not as sinful and evil as they were? If they qualified for receiving your mercy, why am I not equally qualified?” (3).

If Kaliyug (the personified form of the present age, the ‘yuga’, named after ‘Kali’, the deity of this age) had been stronger, more potent and powerful, and more gracious than you are, and had he not been obeying your orders (i.e. had he not been under your command)—then we would have, oh Hari, not bothered you, we would not have relied upon you for succour and solace, and would have stopped praising your fame and glories.

Instead of you, we would have worshipped and adored Kaliyug because it would have served our purpose. We would not have been angry at him or blame him

for all the faults that afflict the world and cause interminable misery and pain to all living beings.⁴ (4).

[⁴In this stanza Tulsidas politely and lovingly warns his Lord Ram that if he starts neglecting his devotees like Tulsidas, then they will think that Kali, the presiding deity of the current corrupt age, is more powerful. No one would then like to offend Kali and invite his wrath. They will stop worshipping the Lord and praying to him for their deliverance from miseries, and instead try to propitiate Kali. The Lord must understand that it will be a very shameful development, and would undermine his divinity and supremacy in this creation. Therefore, the Lord should pay heed to Tulsidas and take special care of the sinful and lowly creatures during the era known as Kaliyug if the Lord wishes to retain his glory and fame in this world.]

But (inspite of what I have said above, we all understand that) you are capable of transforming a humble mosquito into the most exalted Brahma, the Creator, and vice-versa.⁵

[⁵Albeit I have said that if you become slightly careless, the people of the world would think that you are afraid of taking action against Kaliyug or providing help to those whom Kaliyug wishes to enslave, as this would annoy the latter, and you do not wish to annoy him; but it is just for the sake of warning you, for actually all of us know that you are extremely powerful, being the sole Lord and the supreme Authority of creation. Even Kaliyug obeys your commands. We know for sure that you have that power whereby you can elevate the humblest to the stature of the most exalted, symbolised by your ability to turn a humble mosquito into the Creator of this creation!]

Inspite of being so great, able, potent and powerful Lord of the world, (it seems that) are you are abandoning, ignoring and neglecting me. Then, oh Lord, if even you behave this way, what can I do (for I am feeling helpless as I have no one to turn to and complain against you). [But truly Lord, this does not behove of you and your majestic glory!] (5).

Though I have been defeated (i.e. have lost all hopes of salvation and deliverance), and have recoined to my fate of falling in to hell, this Tulsidas has the greatest regret and is most anguished, hurt and sorrowful that even your great and powerful Name could not burn to ashes my sins, faults and blemishes (which prevent me from attaining salvation and eternal peace for myself)! (6).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.

¹Ganika (The prostitute): There was a prostitute by the name of Pingla. One day she had decorated herself with flowers and ornaments and waited eagerly for her lover. When he did not turn up even till midnight, she was very contrite and it dawned upon her that if she had spent so much of her time in devotion and remembrance of the Lord, she would have found deliverance. Right onwards, she turned away from her profession and became an ardent devotee of the Lord. This led to her emancipation and salvation.]

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(7.5) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 97:

If

(97)

जौ पै हरि जनके औगुन गहते ।
 तौ सुरपति कुरुराज बालिसों, कत हठि बैर बिसहते ॥1॥
 जौ जप जाग जोग ब्रत बरजित, केवल प्रेम न चहते ।
 तौ कत सुर मुनिबर बिहाय ब्रज, गोप-गेह बसि रहते ॥2॥
 जौ जहँ-तहँ प्रन राखि भगतको, भजन-प्रभाउ न कहते ।
 तौ कलि कठिन करम-मारग जड़ हम केहि भाँति निबहते ॥3॥
 जौ सुतहित लिये नाम अजामिलके अघ अमित न दहते ।
 तौ जमघट साँसति-हर हमसे बृषभ खोजि खोजि नहते ॥4॥
 जो जगबिदित पतितपावन, अति बाँकुर बिरद न बहते ।
 तौ बहुकलप कुटिल तुलसीसे, सपनेहुँ सुगति न लहते ॥5॥

(97)

jau pai hari janakē auguna gahatē.
 tau surapati kururāja bālisōm, kata haṭhi baira bisahatē. 1.
 jau japa jāga jōga brata barajita, kēvala prēma na cahatē.
 tau kata sura munibara bihāya braja, gōpa-gēha basi rahatē. 2.
 jau jaham̐-taham̐ prana rākhi bhagatakō, bhajana-prabhā'u na kahatē.
 tau kali kaṭhina karama-mārāga jaṛa hama kēhi bhām̐ti nibahatē. 3.
 jau sutahita liyē nāma ajāmilakē agha amita na dahatē.
 tau jamaghaṭa sām̐sati-hara hamasē br̥ṣabha khōji khōji nahatē. 4.
 jō jagabidita patitapāvana, ati bām̐kura birada na bahatē.
 tau bahukalapa kuṭila tulasīsē, sapanēhum̐ sugati na lahatē. 5.

Verse no. 97—Oh Lord Hari (i.e. Lord Sri Ram, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who is also known as 'Hari')! If you had paid attention or minded the faults and misdemeanours of your devotees and those who have surrendered themselves before you ("jana"), then why would you have willingly created enmity and hostility with Indra¹, Duryodhan² and Baali³?⁴ (1).

[¹⁻³A brief note on Indra, Duryodhan and Baali is added at the end of this verse.

⁴To wit, these three had not directly offended you, but you stood against them just because they had offended someone who had taken shelter with you, albeit the latter person was not without faults or blemishes. But you took their side because you have declared your nature of helping those who have come to surrender before you and seek your protection, for then you overlook their shortcomings just like a parent

who overlooks the misdeeds of his own child and protects him or her against others when they come to harm that child.]

If you had not sought love, devotion, affection and total surrender in place of doing Japa (constant repetition of divine formulas known as ‘Mantras’ and the Lord’s holy Name), religious sacrifices (such as fire sacrifices), rituals, penances, austerities, meditation, vows etc. (in order to accrue spiritual merit or credit), then why would you have resided in the household of Gopas (cowherds of Vrindavan) instead of in the abode of Gods (i.e. in the heaven), or at the hermitages of exalted hermits, sages, ascetics etc.⁵? (2).

[⁵To wit, Lord Krishna had obliged even the most humble and the ordinary folk of Vrindavan, called the “Gopas”, by living with them as one of them because the Lord was obliged to do so by the love and affection all of them showed to him. The Lord did not find the heaven where the gods dwell, nor the hermitages of great sages and hermits to be as attractive as the humble residences of the ordinary folks of Vrindavan although these gods duly worshipped the Lord in a formal way, and the sages and hermits diligently followed all practices sanctioned by the scriptures, such as doing a lot of Japa, religious sacrifices, meditation and other meritorious deeds. It is because the Gopas showed heartfelt love and affection for Lord Krishna, treating him as one of them, as their friend, brother and son, instead of treating him in a formal way as the Lord of the world. This clearly shows that love, affection and devotion for the Lord brings him nearer as compared to all other formal meritorious deeds taken together.]

If you had not preserved and upheld the dignity, self-respect, vows and supremacy of your devotees, and thereby establish the paramount nature and supreme effect that your worship and devotion has vis-à-vis other so many religious paths and spiritual practices that are all meritorious and credit worthy in their own right, then how would stupid, ignorant and idiots like us (the ordinary human beings who don’t have any religious or spiritual merit to their name) have ever survived in these difficult times and the rough path of doing countless deeds (some of which may be good, but the majority of which are bad and done out of existential compulsions) during the course of our lives in Kaliyug⁶? (3).

[⁶To wit, we, the ordinary creatures of this age, who can’t do any religious meritorious deed worth the name, who cannot claim liberation and deliverance from the horrors of this world and the interminable sufferings that we are made to suffer in the course of our lives, who can’t expect or hope to have peace and happiness, rely solely on the Lord’s graceful, compassionate and merciful nature to have these benefits—to have peace and happiness, to have liberation and deliverance, to have succour from torments and freedom from sufferings, to be free from the fear of the evil consequences of our deeds and misdemeanours of which there are countless numbers, for otherwise we have no other chance or hope.]

Oh the eliminator of troubles and tribulations (sāṁsati-hara)! If you had not set a precedent by liberating Ajamil from the horrors of hell on the pretext that he had pronounced your holy Name ‘Narayan’ at least once—albeit he had done it to call his son of the same name, then the messengers (of Yam) would have searched out oxen

like us in this world to tie them to their ploughs (i.e. all the sinful creatures like us would have been enslaved by the messengers of death and subjected to interminable sufferings if we did not have the tool of your divine Name to protect us from this doomed existence in hell)⁷. (4).

[⁷Ajamil had called out to his son named “Narayan” to come and protect him when he became terrified upon seeing the horrifying forms of the messengers of Death who had come to drag him to hell as he had not done any meritorious deed in his life. Incidentally, the word “Narayan” also happened to be the name of Lord Vishnu. So, when he shouted “Narayan come here”, the Lord’s messengers thought that he was calling out to their Master, Lord Vishnu. They came instantly and freed the dying Ajamil from the clutches of the messengers of Yam, the God of Death. The messengers of Lord Narayan took Ajamil to the heaven.

Tulsidas alludes to this tale from the ancient scriptures to stress that the Lord’s holy Name is the only succour for the ordinary creatures in this world, for they can’t expect to be delivered from the horrors of death and hell by solely relying upon their deeds while alive. The reason is that it is impossible for anyone to be absolutely perfect and completely without sins, shortcomings, weaknesses and flaws in this world, and so perfect peace and bliss would always elude the creature. He will always be on tenterhooks of uncertainty and affright of punishment for the sins and misdeeds done in life, knowingly or inadvertently, if he does not take the shelter of Lord Ram and his holy Name—for this would be like an umbrella to protect him from the scorching sun of sins and evil deeds. Otherwise, the creature would be yoked to the symbolic plough of Yam and go round and round through the endless cycle of life and death, undergoing the punishment of the previous life in a new life, doing a set of deeds in this life to undergo their punishments in the next life. There would be no liberation and deliverance for the creature from the agonies of this hell-like situation.]

And, if you had not worn the garb (or the symbolic apron) of the famous quality of being a purifier and liberator of the distressed, downtrodden, hapless and humble creatures, then rascals and miscreants like Tulsidas would not have expected any liberation even in their wildest of dreams for many Kalpas (eras)⁸. (5).

[⁸To wit, if Lord Ram hath not taken the vow of providing liberation and deliverance to those who are humble and lowly, who are not able to do expected meritorious deeds in their lives by virtue of the strength of which they can independently attain liberation and deliverance, then only a miniscule number of creatures would have been fortunate to have freedom from the horrors of the cycle of life and death and its sufferings, for the vast majority would have suffered interminably. It is the grace and benediction of the Lord that even the sinful and lowly can expect to have peace and happiness under the shadow of Lord Ram’s umbrella symbolising mercy, compassion, kindness, benevolence, benediction and grace.] (5).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse. He points out that if one could get desired spiritual rewards relying solely on his own good efforts and due diligent following one or more paths sanctioned by the scriptures for obtaining such rewards, then what credit would Lord Ram get; what special powers he has; why is he so lauded and applauded by the scriptures and honoured as the Lord who provides liberation and deliverance even to those who have no scope of attaining freedom from the bondage of sins and sufferance from their horrifying consequences?

The uniqueness of Lord Ram is that once the creature takes his shelter and seeks his refuge—albeit this is done honestly to find redemption and with a firm determination that the sin and misdemeanour would not be henceforth repeated, that the sinner would mend his ways for good, and not done merely to escape punishment for the time being only to revert to dirty old ways once forgiven by the Lord—all his spiritual problems are taken care of; he finds freedom from worries as to what would happen to him due to the burden of sins on his head, is freed from all miseries and torments, is assured of liberation and deliverance, and can be sure to have peace and happiness for his soul.

¹Lord's enmity with Indra (Surapati): Once, Lord Krishna's second wife Satyabhama saw the flower of the Kalp Tree (Parijat tree) with her senior Rukmani. She asked Krishna to bring it for her also, so he went to heaven, fought with Indra and uprooted the entire Kalp Tree with its roots and planted it in the garden of Satyabhama to please her.

Kalpa Tree: The botanical name of the Kalpa Tree is *Adansonis Digitta* and is also called Parijat in Sanskrit meaning 'descended from the sea'. The English name of it is 'Coral Jasmine', in Latin language it is called *Nyctanthes Arbor Tristis* (nyctanthes means night flower while arbor tristis means sad tree), and in Hindi it is called 'Harsingar'. Its flowers are said to be worn by the Gods. The orange colour of the flower is used for dying silk and cotton, a practice originating with Buddhist monks. According to legend, it was produced during the churning of the ocean. The king of Gods, Indra, took it and planted it in his city Amravati. According to another legend (Vishnu Puran), a princess called Parijat fell in love with the Sun-God and followed him throughout the day. As night approached, the sun became disenchanted towards her overtures. Disillusioned and despaired, she died, and a tree grew on the ashes of her funeral pyre. The flowers of this tree could not bear the sight of the sun, it blooms only during the night, and with the crack of dawn, it falls and dies.

²Kururāja: The 5 Pandavas had kept a single woman (Draupadi) as their joint wives, played dice and staked Draupadi as a wager—all these were highly unethical, unrighteous, evil and ignoble deeds of the Pandavas. But seeing their loyalty and devotion towards himself, Lord Krishna overlooked their misdeeds, took their side and created animosity with the Kaurav king Duryodhan leading to the havoc causing Mahabharat war.

³Bāli (The monkey king): Similarly, though Sugriv was not fully above board, Sri Ram took his side and killed his elder brother to enable Sugriv to ascend the throne of Kishkindha.]

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(7.6) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 98:

The Macrocosmic vis-à-vis the Microcosmic form of the Lord

(98)

ऐसी हरि करत दासपर प्रीति ।
 निज प्रभुता बिसारि जनके बस, होत सदा यह रीति ।।1।।
 जिन बाँधे सुर-असुर, नाग-नर, प्रबल करमकी डोरी ।
 सोइ अबिछिन्न ब्रह्म जसुमति हठि बाँध्यो सकत न छोरी ।।2।।
 जाकी मायाबस बिरंचि सिव, नाचत पार न पायो ।
 करतल ताल बजाय ग्वाल-जुबतिन्ह सोइ नाच नचायो ।।3।।
 बिस्वभर, श्रीपति, त्रिभुवनपति, बेद-बिदित यह लीख ।
 बलिसों कछु न चली प्रभुता बरु है द्विज माँगी भीख ।।4।।
 जाको नाम लिये छूटत भव-जनम-मरन दुख-भार ।
 अंबरीष-हित लागि कृपानिधि, सोइ जनमे दस बार ।।5।।
 जोग-बिराग, ध्यान-जप-तप करि, जेहि खोजत मुनि ग्यानी ।
 बानर-भालु चपल पसु पामर, नाथ तहाँ रति मानी ।।6।।
 लोकपाल, जम, काल, पवन, रबि, ससि सब आग्याकारी ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु उग्रसेनके द्वार बेंत कर धारी ।।7।।

(98)

aisī hari karata dāsapara prīti.
 nija prabhutā bisāri janakē basa, hōta sadā yaha rīti. 1.
 jina bām̐dhē sura-asura, nāga-nara, prabala karamakī ḍōrī.
 sō'i abichinna brahma jasumati haṭhi bām̐dhyō sakata na chōrī. 2.
 jākī māyābasa birañci siva, nācata pāra na pāyō.
 karatala tāla bajāya gvāla-jubatinha sō'i nāca nacāyō. 3.
 bisvambhara, śrīpati, tribhuvanapati, bēda-bidita yaha līkha.
 balisōm kachu na calī prabhutā baru hvai dvija mām̐gī bhīkha. 4.
 jākō nāma liyē chūṭata bhava-janama-marana dukha-bhāra.
 ambarīṣa-hita lāgi kṛpānidhi, sō'i janamē dasa bāra. 5.
 jōga-birāga, dhyāna-japa-tapa kari, jēhi khōjata muni gyānī.
 bānara-bhālu capala pasu pāmara, nātha tahām̐ rati mānī. 6.
 lōkapāla, jama, kāla, pavana, rabi, sasi saba āgyākārī.
 tulasidāsa prabhu ugrasēnakē dvāra bēnta kara dhārī. 7.

Verse no. 98—Sri Hari (i.e. Lord Ram who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu whose another name is 'Hari') is so kind, affectionate and lovable towards his devotees that he feels subjugated to them and would go to any length to keep his devotee happy and fulfil his wishes, forgetting his own exalted and renowned stature (as the Lord of all creation). This is in sooth and without any gainsay his natural habit and an eternal temperament. [That is, this nature of the Lord is not artificial or ad-hoc, it is not shown by him to please someone or to serve any vested interest, but it is a part of his

natural character, it is his famous quality for which he has been known since time immemorial.] (1).

The supreme Lord of the world, known as the ‘Brahm’, who keeps a tight leash on the gods, the demons, the serpents and the humans, and drives them in accordance to their individual deeds¹—the same Brahm, who is the eternal, uniform and supreme Lord of creation, was tied forcefully to the pestle by mother Yasodha (mother of Lord Krishna) so much so that he could not untie himself and become free from this artificial bondage (which obviously he allowed himself to suffer willingly, for had he not wanted so no power in creation would have tied him for he was the supreme Lord of this creation and nothing could be done against his will)². (2).

[¹Brahm is the Supreme Being and Lord of creation. He controls the entire world and its inhabitants, all the creatures, all the living beings of whatever denomination and stature, by the virtue of deeds done by them. No one can break free from this law: one reaps what one sows. And it is not an easy job and thing to do, for the gods and demons are super powerful creatures, and to control them and keep them under tight leash is no joke.

Even among the humans there are powerful persons, such as great kings and emperors, great sages, hermits and ascetics whom even the gods and the demons are afraid to offend.

The subterranean creatures represented by the serpents are cited here because they live a life that is not so open and almost hidden from view, for they spend the major part of their lives underground, in burrows, in thickets and caves and holes. Their lives are so secret and hidden from the world that one may think that they would easily escape punishment or reward for their activities. But this is not the case, for nothing is hidden from the supreme Lord who subjects them to the same laws of Karma (deeds) as he does other creatures of creation.

Only an Authority superior and more powerful than all the creatures of this creation can do it. In other words, the “Lord” is the most powerful Being in this creation and its supreme Authority, its Sovereign, and hence no one can subdue him.

In this context, is it not self humiliating for such a mighty Lord and Authority to subject himself to be subdued by ordinary mortal creatures? But the Lord is so gracious that, first he willingly leaves his exalted abode in the heaven and abandons his exalted stature as the cosmic Lord of creation who is infinite and invisible, who is most sublime and subtle, to become like an ordinary creature who has a gross body and is subjected to all the laws governing such mortal beings in his various manifestations or incarnations. One such form was that of Lord Krishna to which Tulsidas alludes to in this verse. The reason why Krishna was tied by his worldly mother is narrated in brief below.

²Krishna and Yashoda: Once, mother Yasoda tried to punish the naughty child Krishna—who had been creating mischief by eating curd and butter stored in the household—by tying him to a pestle, but the rope fell short. The mother used all the rope available in the house, but still could not tie him. Finally, the Lord decided to please the mother by allowing himself to get tied by maneuvering things in such a way that she got him tied to the pestle with the same rope with which she had failed earlier.

The idea is that the supreme Lord of this creation would go to any length, even allowing himself to be tied by worldly fetters though ironically he is the one who breaks them for the rest of the creatures, if he finds that his small action of surrendering to the wish of his devotee would please him or her. In this case, mother

Yasodha wished to tie Lord Krishna to the pestle in order to subdue him and prevent him from eating butter and curd at even odd hours of the day and night, and breaking the earthen pots which contained them, which the Lord was accustomed to doing as part of his worldly sporting activity, he decided to get tied to the pestle just to oblige his mother because she was getting frustrated at not being able to tie him initially. Had the Lord wanted, no matter what Yasodha did she would not have been able to tie him to anything by anything.

There is a remarkable message here: and it is that the Lord showed by his own example here that he himself feels obliged to obey the laws of creation that have been set by him for all other creatures, that they will have to endure the result of their own deeds. In this case, he was punished by his worldly mother for the mischief he was making as a child, and she wished to tie him to a heavy pestle so that his movement is restricted and he is unable to do more mischief. At first the Lord showed that if he does not want no one can tie him, but then he immediately changed his stance and got tied willingly to prove that he has no regrets in subjecting himself to the same rules that he enforces upon the rest of the creatures.]

He, under the influence of whose delusory powers known as ‘Maya’, even Brahma (the creator) and Shiva (the concluder of creation) have danced since time immemorial to the tunes set by him (i.e. they have always obeyed his commands and did his bidding, though they are mighty Gods in their own right), but still they could not find the other end of it (i.e. could not measure the powers of the Lord nor his Maya)—the same Lord was himself made to dance in the courtyard of their homes by the Gopis of Vrindavan who cheered and jested merrily and clapped their hands as the Lord danced to please them³. (3).

[³This alludes to the playful activities of Lord Krishna while he was still a child at Vrindavan. The ‘Gopis’ were the cowherd women folk who loved Krishna so much that they enjoyed his company. They would prevail upon him to dance while they clapped and sang. As the Lord obliged them, all of them cheered and laughed merrily. Tulsidas cites this instance from the life of Lord Krishna to stress that the Lord who had made even the most senior gods of creation such as Brahma and Shiva dance to his tunes and do his bidding, was so obliged by the love and affection showed to him by the ordinary Gopis of Vrindavan that he danced in all odd ways just to please them and make them cheerful.]

It is well established in the world and affirmed by even the Vedas (ancient scriptures) that the Lord God (i.e. the Supreme Being known as ‘Brahm’) is the sustainer and care-taker of the whole universe (or creation), is the Lord of Laxmi (the goddess of wealth and prosperity), and is the undisputed Lord of the three worlds (celestial, terrestrial and subterranean)—even that Lord (who is so exalted, so vast in his authority, form and powers, and supreme) had to become an alms-seeker Brahmin called ‘Vaaman’ (the dwarf mendicant) in order to beg before the great and generous donor king ‘Bali’ because all the Lord's fame, potent, powers and glories became ineffective and lustreless (i.e. were no match for) in front of the latter (Bali)⁴. (4).

[⁴Lord Vishnu, the ‘Supreme Being’, had to assume a humble form of a Brahmin mendicant to beg for alms before king Bali, who was the Sovereign ruler of the whole earth at that time. By this humble act, the Lord showed that he had the greatest respect for Bali who was true to his words, was renowned as a liberal donor who will never turn away anyone seeking anything from him, was extremely morally upright and a diligent follower of righteousness. The Lord showed that he might have

had to subdue Bali's quest to conquer the entire world by forcing him to donate it to him in his form as an alms seeking Brahmin, but it was done to maintain law and order in his creation, for otherwise someone else would also try the same thing even if he was not so upright and righteous as Bali. The Lord had to enforce discipline and ensure that no living being, in this case Bali, no matter how good and meritorious he may be, ever break the law of creation by trying to become immortal, almighty and Lord of the world. If he allowed this for Bali, he would set a bad precedent for the future, so he had to intervene and stop Bali's quest.

But the Lord did this with the greatest of humility and respect for Bali, upholding Bali's desire to rule the world, because only a 'ruler or sovereign' can grant the largesse of land to others as Bali did in favour of Lord Vishnu who was disguised as a mendicant Brahmin.

Another important point to note is that Lord Vishnu, whose original form is so vast that it encompasses the entire creation and encloses it from its outer periphery, giving the Lord the epithet of a 'Viraat Purush', the 'Being with a vast and infinite cosmic form', chose to become a 'dwarf' mendicant named 'Vaaman'. This was a significant gesture for Lord Vishnu—for he wished to tell the world that when it comes to his devotees, he is smaller and humbler than them!

The story of Vaaman and Bali is as follows: Lord Vaaman is the fifth incarnation of Vishnu. The word 'Vaaman' means a dwarf. When Bali, the grandson of Prahalad for whom Vishnu had incarnated as Nrisingh, conquered the entire world and deprived Indra, the king of Gods who ruled over the heavens, Vishnu had taken the dwarfish form of a Brahmin mendicant to retrieve the heaven for Indra when he was requested by Aditi, the mother of Gods, to do so. He approached Bali, who was famous for his charities, as a 'Vaaman' or a dwarf, and begged him for ground sufficient enough to be covered by his three small steps. When the unsuspecting Bali agreed, Vaaman measured the entire earth with one step, the heaven with the second step, and for the third step he measured Bali's own head symbolizing the crown of the kingdom of Bali. He put his third step on Bali's head and pushed the latter to the nether world. Hence, Vishnu is also called 'Trivikram'—one who conquered the three worlds in three steps. But the Lord is so kind and gracious that he saw the injustice done to a magnanimous Bali who had been righteous and firm in his vow of making charity, and never rescinded on his commitments. So, the Lord made him the king of the nether world, and himself took up the job of protecting him there as his gatekeeper. This incarnation of Lord Vishnu is his fifth and followed the Nrisingh form which was the fourth. The idea behind this Vaaman incarnation is that even the most humble looking man, represented by the diminutive Vaaman in this story, can indeed have the stupendous power of the Spirit that even the most powerful gods and kings lack.]

He, the mere remembrance of whose holy Name liberates a soul from the burden of sorrows and miseries that is a part of the cycle of birth and death—the same Lord had to manifest himself ten times (as an incarnation) for the sake of his devotee Ambarisa⁵. (5).

[⁵King Ambarisa: King Ambrish was a great devotee of the Lord and faithfully kept fast on Ikadashi days (the 11th day of the first fortnight of the moon). The scriptures prescribe that the fast of the Ikadashi should be broken the next day on Dwadashi but before the third or Trayodashi by offering food to a Brahmin who comes first on the day of Dwadashi. Incidentally, sage Durbasha, known for his hot temper and wrathful nature, came, and was invited by the king to accept meals. The

sage accepted but went out to do his rituals from which he did not return on time. Meanwhile, the auspicious time was soon due to expire, so in his predicament, Ambarish was advised by Brahmin advisors to put a leaf of Tulsi (basil plant) in his mouth to break the fast. When Durbasha returned, he became so enraged that he cursed Ambarish to take birth ten times. Not contented, he produced a demoness called 'Kritya' and ordered her to eat the king. It was too much for the Lord to bear—so he ordered his 'Chakra' (discus) which cut the demoness' head and rushed at Durbasha. He ran in panic from place to place in the 3 Lokas, but no one gave him shelter. At last, he sought forgiveness from Vishnu who ordered him to go and ask for forgiveness from Ambarish. Durbasha came and fell at the king's feet. Then Vishnu said that he accepts the curse himself (in place of Ambarish) and shall take birth as a human on this earth (as an incarnation) ten times, while at the same time he relieved his devotee Ambarish of the curse.]

He, who is being constantly searched and sought by learned and wise hermits, sages, ascetics (*muni gyānī*) by undertaking all possible means that have been prescribed for attaining success in this endeavour, such as doing meditation, practicing renunciation, concentration, chanting of Mantras, and doing penances and various other austerities (*jōga-birāga, dhyāna-japa-tapa kari*)—verily, the same Lord had made friends with lowly creatures such as monkeys, bears and other humble and fickle creatures who had the physical form of animals (which form is not something to be proud of in the hierarchy of creation)⁶. (6).

[⁶Tulsidas alludes to the Lord's manifestation as Lord Ram when he had befriended monkeys and bears of Kishkindha, and even the vulture Jatayu, or in other words, made himself easily accessible to these creatures, though the Lord is so great and inaccessible that even the most exalted amongst the learned sages and hermits fail to attain him in spite of their best of efforts and adopting the best of means for fulfilment of their wishes.

The Lord of the world had no second thoughts in keeping company with such lowly creatures as monkeys, bears and vulture. He showed that he has no trace of ego and pride in him, and neither is he pretentious and haughty as to assume an aura of greatness in front of humble creature who don't even know what is meant by being almighty and supreme, for these ordinary creatures, the monkeys and bears, simply knew that "Ram" was their Lord and Friend, and this was sufficient for them to have full faith and devotion for Lord Ram, something that the Lord gave precedence to as compared to wisdom and knowledge.

Why is this so? Because the Lord has declared that he is like a loving mother or father who is more concerned about the welfare and good of their innocent child, a child who may have some physical and mental shortcomings or deformities that he can't lead a normal life and is fully dependent upon them, then an intelligent and robust offspring who would be able to stand on his own two feet and fend for himself. These humble and lowly creatures such as the monkeys and bears and vultures did not know how to attain liberation and deliverance by practicing meditation, austerities and renunciation, or repeating the holy Names of the Lord and other spiritual means to have their spiritual well-being. So the Lord obliged them by showing his grace upon them. As for the learned sages and hermits and ascetics, they would also attain their spiritual welfare, but they do not need the help of the Lord to support them.]

He, to whom the Lokpals (guardians of the world), Yam (God of death), Kaal (Death himself; even the factor of Time that rules over the entire creation), Vayu (the Wind God; the essential forces of Nature that inject life and movement in creation), the Sun and the Moon (the two dominant entities in the heaven around which the life cycle of every living being rotates) are all obedient and subordinate—that same Lord stands as a guard himself with a stick in hand at the gates of Ugrasen⁷ out of affection and respect for the latter. (7).

[⁷Ugrasen: The father of Kansha, the maternal uncle of Lord Krishna, was Ugrasen. Kansha had thrown his father into prison and usurped the throne. Lord Krishna had slayed Kansha, reinstated Ugrasen to the throne, and became his door-keeper or guard.]

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse. Further, this verse shows that the supreme Lord can be subservient to his most ordinary devotees.]

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(7.7) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 99:

Glory of Rāma's Holy Name

(99)

बिरद गरीबनिवाज रामको ।
गावत बेद-पुरान, संभु-सुक, प्रगट प्रभाउ नामको ॥1॥
ध्रुव, प्रहलाद, विभीषन, कपिपति, जड़, पतंग, पांडव, सुदामको ।
लोक सुजस, परलोक सुगति, इन्हमें को है राम कामको ॥2॥
गनिका, कोल, किरात, आदिकबि, इन्हते अधिक बाम को ।
बाजिमेघ कब कियो अजामिल, गज गायो कब सामको ॥3॥
छली, मलीन, हीन सब ही अँग, तुलसी सो छीन छामको ।
नाम-नरेस-प्रताप प्रबल जग, जुग-जुग चालत चामको ॥4॥

(99)

birada garībanivāja rāmakō.
gāvata bēda-purāna, sambhu-suka, pragaṭa prabhā'u nāmakō. 1.
dhruva, prahalāda, vibhīṣana, kapipati, jaṛa, pataṅga, pāṇḍava, sudāmakō.
lōka sujasa, paralōka sugati, inhamēm kō hai rāma kāmakō. 2.
ganikā, kōla, kirāta, ādikabi, inhatē adhika bāma kō.
bājimēgha kaba kiyo ajāmila, gaja gāyō kaba sāmakō. 3.
chalī, malīna, hīna saba hī aṅga, tulasī sō chīna chāmakō.

nāma-narēsa-pratāpa prabala jaga, juga-juga cālata cāmakō. 4.

Verse no. 99—The professed vocation, temperament, habit and natural inclination of Lord Sri Ram for which he is so famed in this world (birada rāmakō) is to sufficiently please, satisfy and help those who are poor, humble, helpless, hapless and downtrodden, those who don't expect solace and succour anywhere else and from anyone else (garībanivāja).

The Vedas, the Purans, Lord Shiva and sage Shukdeo (the parrot-sage) etc.—all have asserted this fact and sing this glory of the Lord. The positive effect, the mystical powers, the potent and influence of the Lord's holy Name "RAM" is evident from a wide range of instances cited below. (1).

Dhruv¹, Prahalad², Vibhishan³, Sugriv⁴, inanimate stone (Ahilya)⁵, bird (vulture Jatau⁶, crow Kagbhusund⁷), the five Pandavas⁸ and Sudama⁹—all of them were bestowed with a good fame and renown in this world while they were alive, and were given salvation in the other world (after death). Who among them was of any use to the Lord? [But still the Lord showed his grace upon them as they had taken the shelter of his holy Name and sought his protection.] (2).

Who was a worse sinner than Ganika (the whore named Jiwanti)¹⁰, the Kol-Kirats¹¹ (tribals such as Guha-Nishad)⁵, and the great poet Valmiki¹² (because he was a cruel bandit and hunter once before being transformed into a great sage)?

When did Ajamil¹³ perform the 'Ashwamegh Yagya' (the horse sacrifice) and when did Gaja¹⁴, the elephant, sing Sam-Veda for which they got such excellent rewards which are usually reserved for highly acclaimed and learned persons who undertake these exercises? (3).

[Now, in this stanza Tulsidas talks about himself and says—] 'Who is more deceitful, crooked, darkened or lowly (sinful), meek, devoid of all resources, lean and thin and worn out (emaciated; lacking proper nourishment due to lack of resources and luck) than Tulsidas (chalī, malīna, hīna saba hī amṡa, tulasī sō chīna chāmakō)?

But, in the kingdom of a King represented by Lord Sri Ram's holy Name, and only due to his authority, powers and potentials, even worthless coins made of hide (leather—instead of some precious metal such as silver and gold, even copper or bronze that is normally the way coins of great kings are made of) assume great value and becomes a currency much sought after#. (4).

[#Tulsidas means that even the wretched sinners and lowly creatures who have no worth themselves have been attaining respect and salvation by the good influence of Sri Ram's holy Name for a long time in his kingdom. So if this is the case, then he says that he is also sure and hopes that he too would get to attain salvation and due respect in the kingdom of Lord Ram by relying on the strength of the Lord's holy Name and its potential powers as briefed above.

The picture that Tulsidas presents of himself in this stanza is simply to emphasise that he is extremely poor and ordinary, and that in the usual course of life he cannot expect any good for himself. But as things turned out for him, he had become one of the most respected poet and devotee of the Lord the annals of history has recorded. So, Tulsidas assigns the credit for this achievement entirely to Lord Ram and his holy Name.]

[¹The story of Dhruv—King Uttanpad had two queens, Suruchi and Suniti, but the king favoured Suruchi more. Once, Suniti's son Dhruv sat on the lap of his father while Suruchi's son was also sitting on his other lap. Suruchi could not tolerate this due to jealousy and malice, and admonished Dhruv and pulled the child down from his father's lap. The child was so emotionally hurt that he went crying to his mother Suruchi. Then the latter consoled her son, telling him that his real father was the Lord God, that he should strive to attain him and sit on his laps, and for that he has to have devotion and do severe austerities and penances. Moved, Dhruv did what was told and had a personal divine viewing (Darshan) of the Lord, and as a boon received a stable position in the heavens represented by the so-called North Star, also called 'Dhruv-Tara' in local folklore.

²The story of Prahalad—He was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu. He was the eldest son of the king of demons, named Hiranyakashipu. His mother was Kayaadhu, the daughter of the demon king named Jambhaasur. Both the mother and the son were initiated by sage Narad who had inspired them to become devotees of Lord Vishnu.

The story of Prahalad is narrated in detail in (i) Vishnu Puran, 1/17-20, and (ii) Bhagvata Puran, 7/3-10.

The father, being a demon, was an inveterate opponent of Lord Vishnu, and so naturally he couldn't tolerate his own son worshipping his enemy Lord Vishnu. He tried his best to dissuade Prahalad from being devoted to the Lord, but the son had immense faith in the Lord and would not be deterred by his father's threats and scolding. Hiranyakashipu tried even cruel means to change Prahalad, including an attempt to burn in a raging fire, but the child devotee escaped unscathed. So, finally the demon father decided to kill him personally. Prahalad was tied to a pillar and asked 'Where is your Lord Vishnu? Is he in this pillar also?' The child replied in the affirmative. Then his father swung the sword to kill him, and it was at this instant that Lord Vishnu revealed himself as the famous incarnation known as 'Nrsingh'—the upper half of his body was like a lion and the lower half was like a man. An Upanishad titled 'Nrsingh Tapini Upanishad' of the Atharva Veda is dedicated to this Lord.

Lord Nrsingh snatched the sword and laid the demon father across his laps. He then tore through his abdomen, and yanked out his intestines, thereby killing the demon. He then picked up the child Prahalad on to his laps and lovingly licked and caressed him like a lion does to its cub. But Prahalad prayed to the Lord to provide deliverance to the soul of his father, at which the Lord liberated the demon from all his sins.

Prahalad is credited with enumerating the nine-fold path of Bhakti, the path of devotion for the Lord, in the epic Bhaagvata, 7/5/23.

Lord Dattatreya, one of the manifestations of Lord Vishnu, had preached Prahalad about the eclectic state of Avadhut Sanyasi in the form of a huge python, known as Ajgara. Prahalad had spiritual discussions also with other sages such as Hansa (the divine Swan, an incarnation of Vishnu), and with Indra (the king of Gods).

Prahalad had four brothers, three sons and a daughter. The king of demons known as Bali, who was famous for his charities and donations, was a grandson of Prahalad. The incarnations of Vishnu as Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant, is related to this legendary king.

³The story of Vibhishan—Vibhishan was the younger brother of Ravana and a devout devotee of the Lord in the form of Sri Ram. He was like an oasis of devotion, faith

and love in the desert of demons and their reckless misdemeanours and cruelties. He had advised Ravana that Sri Ram was no ordinary prince and that Sita should be returned to Ram if Ravana wished to save Lanka and himself. At this he was kicked by his brother; in consternation and indignation, Vibhishan sought the shelter/refuge of Sri Ram and was most welcomed in Ram's camp. In the final battle with Ravana, it was he who had told the secret of Ravana's life and invincibility—the elixir of life cocooned in his navel. Sri Ram killed Ravana by shooting an arroww, among others, at his navel and absorbing or drying up the nectar. But, Vibhishan got the eternal ignominy of being symbolic of betrayal and fratricide. The story of Vibhishan and his surrender to Lord Ram, and his subsequent anointment by the Lord as the next king of Lanka has been described in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.]

⁴The story of Sugriv—He was the younger brother of Baali, the king of the monkey kingdom of Kishkindha. Once it so happened that a demon named Mayavi came to challenge Baali in the middle of the night. Baali went to pursue the challenger who ran away and entered a cave. Baali followed the demon in, but asked his younger brother Sugriv to guard the mouth of the cave. When one month elapsed and Baali did not come out, but instead Sugriv saw a stream of blood flowing out of the cave, he was sore affright, thinking that the demon had killed his elder brother and would now come to kill him. So Sugriv put a huge boulder on the mouth of the cave to close it as best he could and fled. When the ministers found that the throne had fallen vacant, they anointed Sugriv as the king of Kishkindha, though he did not wish to become a king but had to accept the offer most reluctantly so that there was no chaos and rivalry for the throne.

Baali in the meantime killed the demon, and it was the demon's blood that had streamed out of the cave that was mistaken by Sugriv to be of his brother's. When Baali returned to Kishkindha and saw Sugriv as the king, he however lost all cool, and a grave misunderstanding took root in his heart, for he thought that the heavy boulder put on the mouth of the cave was put there purposely by Sugriv so he could grab the throne. Baali was so peeved and angry that he beat Sugriv black and blue and expelled him from the kingdom for all times. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kishkindha Kand, Chaupai line nos.1-11 that precedes Doha no. 6.

⁵The story of Ahilya—Sage Gautam's wife Ahilya was very beautiful. Once Indra cheated her by posing as her husband while he was away. Incensed at this adulterous behaviour, sage Gautam cursed Indra to have thousands of holes in his body and Ahilya to become a stone. She was liberated from this cursed state when Sri Ram touched her with his foot en-route to Janakpur with sage Vishwamitra. This episode is narrated by Tulsidas in (i) Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 211; and (ii) Geetawali, Baal Kand, verse nos. 57—59.

⁶The story of Jatau— Jatau was a vulture by birth but a great devotee of Lord Ram. When Ravana was rushing towards Lanka on his chariot with Sita as captive, it was Jatau who had fought fiercely with him in an attempt to rescue Sita from the demon's clutches. But ultimately Ravana had cut off his wings, and so the unfortunate Jatau fell down on the ground, mortally wounded. He kept repeating the holy Name of Lord Ram and managed to hold on to his life till the time the Lord came there in his search of Sita. Jatau told the Lord about Ravana stealing Sita and proceeding towards Lanka

in the south direction. Then Jatau left his mortal coil while Lord Ram held him in his arms, caressing him and wiping his wounds with his own hands and using the plaits of his long hairs. When Jatau died, the Lord did his last rites himself—a privilege that no one else except one other character, i.e. Sabari, had got in the whole story of the Ramayana. Even Dasrath, who was the worldly father of the Lord, was denied this honour when he died at Ayodhya after the Lord was sent to exile in the forest because at that time only Bharat and Shatrughan were present in the city, and so his last rites were performed by Bharat. This episode is narrated in all the versions of the Ramayana, e.g. in the Ram Charit Manas of Tulsidas, in its Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29 right upto Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33.

It ought to be noted here that prior to this, Lord Ram has met Jatau earlier in the forest and befriended him. Jatau was a friend of Dasrath, and he had assured the Lord that he will stay in close proximity with them (Ram, Sita and Laxman) in the forest to keep a vigilant eye and give them protection to the best of his might—this is narrated in the Adhyatma Ramayan of sage Veda Vyas, Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 1-7. This fact is also endorsed by Tulsidas in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 12, stanza no. 2.

The glorious way that Jatau died has been lauded and applauded by Tulsidas in Dohawali verse nos. 222-227. Refer also to Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse nos. 12-16.

“Lord Ram lifted Jatau onto his lap and washed his wounds with the tears streaming from his (Ram’s) eyes”—this is said in Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 13, stanza no. 1, while Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 30 says that “the Lord moved his loving hand carrassingly on his head”.

Jatau’s special death which made him a subject of jealousy and envy for all other exalted persons as narrated in the Doha above has one unique aspect—inspite of him being a vulture by birth and body, he was given an honour befitting a father by none else than the Supreme Being (Lord Ram) himself when the Lord performed his last rites himself—refer: (i) Geetawali, Aranya Kand, verse no. 16, stanza no. 4; verse no. 14, stanza no. 1; (ii) Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, Doha no. 32; (iii) Kavitawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 16, line no. 3; (iv) Doha no. 227 of Dohawali; (v) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 164, stanza no. 2; verse no. 138, stanza no. 3, line no. 1.

⁷The story of the five Pandava brothers is central to the story of the epic war of Mahabharat. They were numerically miniscule and had no might that comes with being a king of a great kingdom, for all numbers and powers were in favour of their cousins, the Kaurav brothers, who were not only a hundred in number but had the backing of the mighty kingdom of which Hasitinapur was the capital. The Pandavas had been exiled and had been hounded by the Kauravas, and they roamed around for the fear of their lives. Lord Krishna took pity on them, and he took up their cause personally. This resulted in the savage and calamitous war of Mahabharat where the mighty army of the Kauravas was defeated and all of them killed, while all the five Pandavas survived the war and their honour was restored with this victory. The credit went solely to Lord Krishna.

⁸The story of Sudama: He was a classmate of Krishna during their adolescent days, but fell on bad days and became extremely impoverished. At the behest of his wife, he once went to pay a visit to Krishna who, by this time, had become the great king of Dwarka. But Sudama was so wretchedly poor that he had nothing but four fistfuls of

puffed rice flakes to take as a visiting gift for Krishna. Sri Krishna was so moved at this gesture and at Sudama's abject poverty that he not only accepted those four humble fistfulls of dry coarse puffed rice flakes but also rewarded him with immense wealth and prosperity which even put Kuber, the God of wealth, to shame.

What Tulsidas means is: Krishna had nothing to gain by showing honour to Sudama who was utterly poor and humble, a person with no means and wherewithal. But he loved his friend 'Krishna', and so the Lord honoured him for this affection.

¹⁰The story of Ganika—There was a prostitute by the name of Pingla. One day she had decorated herself with flowers and ornaments and waited eagerly for her lover. When he did not turn up even till midnight, she was very contrite and it dawned upon her that if she had spent so much of her time in devotion and remembrance of the Lord, she would have found deliverance. Right onwards, she turned away from her profession and became an ardent devotee of the Lord. This led to her emancipation and salvation.

¹¹The 'Kol and Kirats' were the humble and illiterate tribals whom Lord Ram met and obliged during his way to the forest. He conversed with them, sat surrounded by them to give them his company, partook of food they offered, and did everything practical to please them and make them feel happy. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 88; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 135—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 137; and (iii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 250—to Chaupai line no. 8 that precedes Doha no. 251.

¹²The story of Valmiki— Sage Valmiki is well known for his classical work known as the famous epic 'Ramayana', which is his magnum opus. He is also credited with penning Advhut Ramayan in which Sita had assumed the form of Maha Kali to kill the Ravana with a thousand heads.

Valmiki is said to be the son of sage Pracheta who is said to be the son of Varun, the Water God. He is also said to be one of the Prajaapatis—the ancient patriarchs of this world.

According to Adhyatma Ramayan, Ayodhya Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 57-58 he was a Brahmin by birth but became a robber and adopted their means of livelihood because he was brought up by robbers. Once the seven celestial sages known as the Sapta-Rishis went through the forest where he lived, and Valmiki accosted them. When asked by the sages why he robbed others, Valmiki replied that he did it to feed his family and other dependants. The sages advised him that they would not share the consequences of sins that he is committing for them. To test the correctness of this advice, Valmiki tied them to a tree and went to his house to ask his kith and kin if they would share any misfortune that might befall upon him. When they replied that they are only concerned with what loot he brings home, Valmiki's eyes of wisdom opened instantaneously. He rushed back to the sages, untied them and fell at their feet seeking forgiveness. He asked them to show him the path by which he can seek redemption and salvation for himself. The sages then advised him to do Japa (repetition) with Lord Ram's holy Name 'RAM'. Valmiki said that he was so sinful that it is not possible for him to utter the Lord's holy Name. At this, the sages thought over the matter and told him to repeat the name in the reverse order—as 'MARA'. When this word MARA is repeated it becomes RAM. This trick worked fine for Valmiki, and he immediately sat down to do Tapa (severe form of penance) and

meditated on the name of the Lord in the reverse order. He became so immobile and lost in contemplation that a mound of anthill formed around his body. It so happened that when the sages returned to the same place during their return journey, they saw him in this condition. They poured consecrated water on him and revived him. It was then that they gave him a new name 'Valmiki', which means 'one who has emerged from an anthill'. This story is narrated in *Adhyatma Ramayan*, *Ayodhya Kand*, 6/57-58.

He established a hermitage on the banks of river Tamsa and lived there. Lord Ram went to meet him during his outward journey to the forest, and it was in the sage's hermitage that Sita lived and her two sons Lav and Kush were born when she was sent to exile by Ram during the final days of the Lord's days on earth as a prelude to his winding up his worldly 'Leela' or deeds and ascending to the heaven as Lord Vishnu.

One day Valmiki saw a hunter shoot down a male bird and heard the wailings of his companion, the female bird. He cursed the hunter in a verse that came out of his mouth in a poetic style called the *Anushtup Chand* (metre). Never before had Valmiki ever composed any verse, so he was astonished at this development. Then Brahma the creator appeared before him and ordered him to compose the epic *Ramayan* for which the basic story was provided to him by sage Narad.

The genesis of the story of *Ramayan* is this—Once the celestial sage Narad came to his hermitage (called an *Ashram*) on the behest of Brahma. Valmiki asked him if there was anyone living in this creation who embodied all the 16 *Kalaas* (qualities) that the Supreme Being is known to possess. Then Narad told him about Lord Ram. This is how the grand and magnificent story of the *Ramayan* was revealed.

¹³The story of Ajamil—Dwij Bandhu is another name of Ajamil because he was a Brahmin by birth. But unfortunately he became enamoured with a prostitute and married her. Bad company made him turn into a hunter. One day a group of sages passed by the village. When they asked the villagers if there was a Brahmin's house where they could spend the night, the villagers told them of Ajaamil. So these sages decided to spend the night there. When Ajaamil returned from his hunting trip with a catch of a bird and saw the sages, he felt very ashamed. He confided with them that he is a fallen man and that they should not eat in his house. The saints had a merciful heart and they thought amongst themselves that it is their moral obligation to show this man some way by which he can find liberation and deliverance.

They cooked their own meals with whatever they had. The next day, they summoned Ajaamil and told him, 'Look, your wife is pregnant. She will soon deliver a son. Give that son the name 'Narayan' (one of the many names of Lord Vishnu). This would lead to your emancipation.' And then the group of sages went on their journey.

When the son was born, Ajaamil named him as advised by them—he called the son 'Narayan'. He was very fond of the son, and called out his name 'Narayan, Narayan' umpteen numbers of times during the course of the day. He was unwittingly taking the name of Lord Vishnu. This continued till the time came for his death.

When he was tormented by the messengers of Yam, the God of hell and death, he became terrified and called out in fear—'Narayan, Narayan. Save me'. Though he was calling his son, but the Lord heard his name being called out by someone in distress. So he sent his own messengers to protect the caller. The messengers of Lord Vishnu chased away the messengers of Yam and took Ajaamil to heaven. When Yam complained to Vishnu, the Lord told him that if anyone calls out his name at the time

of death he is duty-bound to liberate and protect him. This story tells us the power of the name of the Lord.

This story is narrated in Srimad Bhagwat, 6/1-2.

¹⁴The story of Gaja— In the ancient country of Dravid (the present day South India), there was a kingdom called Pandyaraaj whose king was named Indradumna. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and used to offer regular worship to the Lord with great diligence. Once, sage Agastya passed that way with his retinue of disciples. The king was so engrossed in the worship of the Lord that he did not notice the sage and neither did he get up to welcome him or pay his obeisance to him. This annoyed the sage and he cursed—‘You are like a haughty and wild elephant who pays no heed to those standing in the front. Therefore, you deserve to become an elephant—so you would take a birth as an elephant.’ When the king died he became an elephant in a pleasant island in the middle of the Kshirsagar, the celestial ocean of milk.

He had a majestic body and was very strong in his herd. Once he was playing with his she-elephants and companions in a large and beautiful pond. In this pond lived an alligator/crocodile who was actually a Gandharva (a semi-god) named Huhu in his previous life and had become an alligator due to a curse of sage Deval. The alligator/crocodile caught hold of the leg of the elephant and started pulling him inside the deep lake. The Gaja himself and all his companions tried their best but failed to free him from the mouth of the alligator. A long tussle followed and the elephant became completely exhausted. When the situation became so bad that the Gaja, the elephant, was about to sink fully inside the water, he broke a lotus flower and offered it to Lord Vishnu as his last worship and offering before dying. The merciful Lord rushed instantly astride his mount, called the Garud, to save him. Reaching the spot within a moment, the Lord pulled the Gaja out of the water with one hand, and with the other he opened the mouth of the alligator to yank the leg of the elephant free from its clutches. Then the Lord cut off the alligator’s head with his circular weapon known as the Chakra.

Both the alligator/crocodile and the elephant found liberation—the alligator/crocodile reverted to his earlier form of a Gandharva, and Gaja the elephant assumed a divine form similar to that of the Lord and went to his abode in the heaven.]

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

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(7.8) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 101:

Lord Rāma is the only Benevolent Lord

(101)

जाउँ कहाँ तजि चरन तुम्हारे।
 काको नाम पतित-पावन जग, केहि अति दीन पियारे।।1।।
 कौने देव बराइ बिरद-हित, हठि हठि अधम उधारे।
 खग, मृग, ब्याध, पषान, बिटप जड़, जवन कवन सुर तारे।।2।।
 देव, दनुज, मुनि, नाग, मनुज सब, माया-बिबस बिचारे।
 तिनके हाथ दासतुलसी प्रभु, कहा अपनपौ हारे।।3।।

(101)

jā'um̐ kahām̐ taji carana tumhārē.
 kākō nāma patita-pāvana jaga, kēhi ati dīna piyārē. 1.
 kaunē dēva barā'i birada-hita, haṭhi haṭhi adhama udhārē.
 khaga, mṛga, byādha, paṣāna, biṭapa jaṛa, javana kavana sura tārē. 2.
 dēva, danuja, muni, nāga, manuja saba, māyā-bibasa bicārē.
 tinakē hātha dāsatalasī prabhu, kahā apanapau hārē. 3.

Verse no. 101—Oh Lord! Where else should I go except at your holy feet? [Where will I find refuge and shelter other than at your holy feet; where will I go if I leave you?]

Who else is called 'patita-pāvana' (the purifier of sinners, of those who are evil, vile, unrighteous and unscrupulous) in this world (except you)?

Who else dearly loves the wretched, the poor, the distressed, the humble, the hapless and the helpless creatures more than you? (1).

Till this date, which other God had purposefully and diligently searched out such creatures and provided salvation to the downtrodden, the miscreants, the rascals, the lowly and the sinners et al (haṭhi haṭhi adhama udhārē) just to uphold his fame, his promise, his vow, his reputation and his character of being a 'salvation-provider' to all and sundry (kaunē dēva barā'i birada-hita)?

Say, which God has given salvation and emancipation to a bird (Jatau), animals (monkeys, bears, deer etc.), a cruel hunter-cum-bandit (Valmiki), a stone (Ahilya), inanimate trees (Yamalarjun) and barbarians (the demons or other savage-minded creatures) (khaga, mṛga, byādha, paṣāna, biṭapa jaṛa, javana kavana sura tārē)? (2).

The Gods, demons, sages/hermits/ascetics, serpents (reptile-like creatures), humans etc.—all of them are ensnared by and under the control of 'Maya' (delusions, infatuations, ignorance, attachments) (dēva, danuja, muni, nāga, manuja saba,

māyā-bibasa bicārē). [How can one, who is himself in fetters, liberate others? Therefore, I can't expect any thing or any help from these poor fellows—"bicārē".]

Hence, oh Lord, what will this Tulsidas gain by subjugating himself to them or seeking favours from them (instead of you) (tinakē hātha dāsatulasī prabhu, kahā apanapau hārē)?¹ (3).

[¹Everyone in this creation is subjected to some sort of fetters. Even the great Gods and exalted sages and hermits are not exempt from it. Tulsidas says what can he expect from them who are themselves slaves and bound in fetters of Maya.

Besides this, no one would want himself to be surrounded by sinners and lowly fellows; they would try to avoid such people if possible, and shoo them away if they happen to come near forcefully. But Lord Ram has a different attitude: he welcomes the lowly and the sinful, frees them of all their negative traits, makes them feel comfortable and transformed, and removes their worries and miseries. Say, what more would anyone want?

Tulsidas' advice to all is simple: It is wise and sensible to take shelter with Lord Ram, and not to go begging before so many gods and holy men. No one will help you except the Lord.]

[Note—This verse is extremely popular.]

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(7.9) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 105:

Lord Rāma's Holy Name is like the Gem called Cintāmaṇī

(105)

अबलों नसानी, अब न नसैहौं ।
 राम-कृपा भव-निसा सिरानी, जागे फिरि न डसैहौं ॥1॥
 पायेउँ नाम चारु चिंतामनि, उर कर तें न खसैहौं ।
 स्यामरूप सुचि रुचिर कसौटी, चित कंचनहिं कसैहौं ॥2॥
 परबस जानि हँस्यो इन इंद्रिन, निज बस है न हँसैहौं ।
 मन मधुकर पनकै तुलसी रघुपति-पद-कमल बसैहौं ॥3॥

(105)

abalaum nasānī, aba na nasaihaum.

rāma-kṛpā bhava-nisā sirānī, jāgē phiri na ḍasaihaum. 1.

pāyē'um nāma cāru cintāmani, ura kara tēm na khasaihaum.

syāmarūpa suci rucira kasautī, cita kañcanahim kasaihaum. 2.

parabasa jāni haṁśyō ina indrina, nija basa hvai na haṁśaihaum.

mana madhukara panakai tulasī raghupati-pada-kamala basaihaum̐. 3.

Verse no. 105—This life has been in vain and wasted till now (abalaum̐ nasānī), but now onwards I will not let it go in vain (aba na nasaihaum̐).

By the mercy and grace of Lord Sri Ram (rāma-kṛpā), the world and its delusions in the form of a dark night has passed away (i.e. I have woken up from this delusory, materialistic, false and illusionary world; “bhava-nisā sirānī”).

Now that I have woken up (i.e. now that I have realised the delusory nature of the world and the futility of pursuing it and pleasing it), I will not spread the mattress of delusions once again and allow myself to be bitten by its (i.e. I shall not fall in the trap of the delusory and mirage-like world again and allow myself to suffer any longer; “jāgē phiri na ḍasaihaum̐”). (1).

I have found a beautiful ‘Chintamani’¹ gem called Sri Ram's holy Name (pāyē’um̐ nāma cāru cintāmani).

I shall never let it fall from the grasp of the hands of my heart (ura kara tēm̐ na khasaihaum̐). [To wit, I shall remember Lord Sri Ram constantly in my heart and shall guard this gem by chanting his name all through my life.]

Indeed and surely, I shall test the purity of the gold representing my mind and intellect (cita kañcanahim̐ kasaihaum̐) against the touchstone of Sri Ram's pure, beautiful and dark countenance (syāmarūpa suci rucira kasautī) [That is to say, I shall watch whether or not my mind is constantly focussed on the divine form of Lord Ram, and whether it remembers the Lord at all times.] (2).

[¹The ‘Cintāmani’ is a rare gem that possesses mystical powers to remove the worries, worldly as well as spiritual, of the person who has it in his possession.

Here, Tulsidas means that since he has the holy and divine Name of Lord Sri Ram as his precious possession, he has nothing to worry about, either in this world or in the world hereafter. And like a person, who by his good fortune, manages to have such a rare and priceless gem, he too would take all precautions to guard this gem that symbolizes Lord Ram’s holy Name and its exceptional spiritual powers.]

As long as I was subjugated by (i.e. was servile to) the sense organs, they made me dance to their tunes and made a foolish clown of me (i.e. they made fun of me; “parabasa jāni hamśyō ina indrina”), but now that I am free of them, I am in control of myself, I shall not let myself be subjected to derision and jest by these sense organs who had exploited me for so long by falling prey to temptations of the world and its sense objects (nija basa hvai na hamśaihaum̐)².

Tulsidas says: ‘I shall now willfully and diligently divert my mind-like bee to the lotus feet of Lord Sri Ram (mana madhukara panakai tulasī raghupati-pada-kamala basaihaum̐).’ [To wit, I shall not allow my mind to wander anywhere, and ensure that it stays focused on the holy feet of my Lord Sri Ram.] (3).

[²It is the sense organs of the body of an individual that forces him to be attracted to the world as these organs seek gratification from their respective objects in this world. This creates a smoke-screen whereby the creature thinks that he can find happiness and peace and fulfilment by pursuing the world. But once wisdom and realisation dawns upon the mental horizon of the person and he understands that it is a trap for him, he would turn his mind away from all this, and instead focus it on reality that would give him lasting peace and happiness.]

[Note—This verse is extremely popular.]

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(7.10) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 114:

(114)

माधव! मो समान जग माहीं ।
 सब बिधि हीन, मलीन, दीन अति, लीन—बिषय कोउ नाहीं ॥1॥
 तुम सम हेतुरहित कृपालु आरत—हित ईस न त्यागी ।
 मैं दुख—सोक—बिकल कृपालु! केहि कारन दया न लागी ॥2॥
 नाहिंन कछु औगुन तुम्हार, अपराध मोर मैं माना ।
 ग्यान—भवन तनु दियेहु नाथ, सोउ पाय न मैं प्रभु जाना ॥3॥
 बेनु करील, श्रीखंड बसंतहि दूषन मृषा लगावै ।
 सार—रहित हत—भाग्य सुरभि, पल्लव सो कहु किमि पावै ॥4॥
 सब प्रकार मैं कठिन, मृदुल हरि, दृढ़ बिचार जिय मोरे ।
 तुलसिदास प्रभु मोह—सुखला, छुटिहि तुम्हारे छोरे ॥5॥

(114)

mādhava! mō samāna jaga māhīm.
 saba bidhi hīna, malīna, dīna ati, līna-biṣaya kō'u nāhīm. 1.
 tuma sama hēturahita kṛpālu ārata-hita īsa na tyāgī.
 maiṁ dukha-sōka-bikala kṛpālu! kēhi kārana dayā na lāgī. 2.
 nāhinna kachu auguna tumhāra, aparādha mōra maiṁ mānā.
 gyāna-bhavana tanu diyēhu nātha, sō'u pāya na maiṁ prabhu jānā. 3.
 bēnu karīla, śrīkhaṇḍa basantahi dūṣana mṛṣā lagāvai.
 sāra-rahita hata-bhāgya surabhi, pallava sō kahu kimi pāvai. 4.
 saba prakāra maiṁ kaṭhina, mṛdula hari, dṛṛha bicāra jiya mōrē.
 tulasidāsa prabhu mōha-sṛṅkhalā, chuṭihi tumhārē chōrē. 5.

Verse no. 114—Oh Madhav! There is no one in this world who is more devoid of resources, a greater sinner, more humble, lowly, downtrodden, helpless and hapless, and engrossed more in the pleasures of the senses, their gratification, and being more attracted to the materialistic world as compared to me (1).

And there is no other Lord in this world who shows greater graciousness, kindness, mercy, compassion and benevolence than you, one who can forfeit or relinquish everything else just for the sake of the welfare and well-being of those who are humble, pitiable, hapless and wretched¹.

[¹To wit, Oh Lord Ram, you have abandoned Vaikunth or your heavenly abode and have come down to this sinful world just for the sake of your devotees; you have discarded your cosmic, eternally formless, all-pervading, all-encompassing and subtle form to manifest yourself as a human being in this mortal, mundane world just for the benefit of your devotees—what greater sacrifice can anyone else do for those who are devoted to him? Indeed, you have kept the good and the welfare of the humble and the ordinary creatures of the gross world above your own greatness and pleasures so much so that you came down to live with them to share their pain and suffering like an ordinary human being on the one hand, and on the other hand to give them a chance to worship you so closely and find the same degree of happiness, joy and bliss, the same level of freedom from worldly miseries and the hope of redemption as enjoyed by great sages and hermits who are enlightened and self-realised, who have done so many spiritual exercises and have undertaken so many spiritual practices that spiritual joy and deliverance of their soul is there for their asking.]

Inspite of this, I am still agitated due to sorrows, miseries, troubles, tribulations and torments of various kinds. Oh merciful, kind-hearted, benevolent and munificent Lord! For what reason do you not have mercy and compassion on me?²

[²To wit, despite being so nice, gracious, compassionate and merciful by nature as outlined above, why is it that you are neglecting me? Why is that I still harbour fears of so many kinds? Perhaps it is my own foolishness and ignorance that I don't realise that you who are so kind as to place the pleasure and happiness of your devotees before your own comforts would certainly and surely take care of me, for I unwarrantly wail and squirm in my imaginary troubles, forgetting for the time being that my Lord is very watchful and conscious of his duties and responsibilities towards my good.] (2).

I agree that in this, there is no fault of yours, and it is due to my own crimes or sins or misdeeds (that I am suffering so much, and you have preferred to let me do some sort of repentance or penitence for my past sins by momentarily overlooking my pleas for mercy).

It is apparently the case so because, inspite of having received this human body from you (i.e. by your grace, for you are the Creator of the world and its supreme Father), a body which is considered to be a stepping-stone by which all knowledge and wisdom can be accessed, a body which is a means by which a creature can attain enlightenment, spiritual liberation and salvation, I have still not recognised a Lord like you (i.e. I have yet not realised who you actually are; I have not understood your true form as the Redeemer and the Liberator of the Soul, the Lord God of the world, but continue to treat you as a mere prince of Ayodhya whose name is Ram!)³ (3).

[³Put simply, Tulsidas warns the world, albeit through his own example, that a person suffers agony and grief which is of his own making, and then he endlessly blames the Lord God for his pains and sufferings, forgetting that he himself is to be blamed for all his misfortunes. Has he forgotten about his past sins; does he not know that everyone has to bear with what he sows as this is the 'law of Karma in this creation' that one gets what one sows, which the Lord can't change as the Lord is the one who himself has established this code. Of course it is true that the Lord, being the supreme Judge, can certainly reduce the intensity and duration of the punishment due for the sins committed by a person, for the Lord is so eternally merciful and kind that he can even forgive and requite them altogether, but that does not mean one would

accuse the Lord for not paying heed to one's prayer. Is it not wrong that one would expect instant relief-on-demand for sins committed over countless births as if the Lord was his servant? So, it will be far better for a creature to have faith in the Lord God and his well-known nature of being merciful and kind, to have patience with the Lord once a creature leaves himself and his fate in the hands of the Lord. Then the Lord will feel it obligatory and incumbent upon himself in line with his own reputation to do something for the creature who has surrendered himself unconditionally before the Lord as the 'ball is now in the Lord's own court' so to say, instead of when the creature wails and accuses the Lord of being stone-hearted and neglecting his prayers, for then the Lord would point out his sins to him and say "what do you say for this long list of sins that you have been carrying on your head over generations".

Remember: Tulsidas was no ordinary person; he was not a sinful man but a saintly and blessed soul who was totally devoted to Lord Ram and had the Lord's unflinching protection upon him. Nay, Tulsidas is not talking about his own personal sufferings when he makes the observations about his miseries, but he is merely taking the recourse of his own self to highlight the general way in which the creature is suffering in this world out of his own ignorance and delusions. To avoid being called names and being accused of being pretentious by acting as a 'holy cow' as if he is completely above sins and reproach, that he sees only faults in others while pretending to be most righteous and pious himself, he has devised this device of accusing himself first-hand, and placing himself at the top of the list of sinners to advise us all how we should pray most humbly to the Lord, how we should surrender ourselves before the Lord with soulful prayers begging for the Lord's mercy, because that would assure us of the Lord's attention without fail.]

A Bamboo plant and the 'Karil' tree (a thorny leafless shrub) falsely accuse Chandan (sandalwood) and Basant (spring season) respectively of being unkind to them, forgetting that their own ill-luck and fate are to be blamed for their misfortune. The Bamboo has no pith in it (for it is hollow from the inside), so how can it absorb the scent of the sandalwood? Similarly, the 'Karil' tree has no leaves on it by its genetic nature, so how can the spring season produce leaves on it and make it laden with foliage like other green trees?⁴ (4).

[⁴The bamboo grumbles that though it is so close to the sandalwood tree and almost like it, the latter does not let its scent to be shared with the former. The bamboo feels jealous of the sandalwood tree that it does not have the same sort of attractive scent as the latter. But it forgets that while the stem of the sandalwood tree is solid from the inside, that of the bamboo is hollow. How can something that is hollow from within hold and retain any chemical substance inside it that would enable it to emanate a fragrance? But the bamboo accuses the sandalwood instead of realising its own shortcomings.

Similarly, the Karil tree belongs to that family of the plant kingdom which do not have the required genetic code that would leaves. How can then the spring season implant leaves on the stems of the Karil tree like it does on other green trees when it is genetically not destined to have it?

Citing these two examples Tulsidas says that I am wrongfully, out of my own ignorance and delusions and lack of wisdom, accusing my benevolent Lord Ram of not paying heed to me, for I do not know the lot of sins and misdeeds that I have on my head. I do not realise that I myself is to be blamed for all my miseries. I should

rather thank the Lord for being so gracious that inspite of my fate decreeing greater horrors and sufferings for me, he has made them so small that I can easily cope with them without much of a problem. Instead of being patience and tolerant, I feel agitated and raise an accusing finger upon the Lord for being stone-hearted. Don't and won't I understand that had it not been for the Lord's mercy, I would have been worse off than what I am today. I have no right to accuse you of negligence and careless attitude towards me.]

Oh Hari! I am stubborn, head-strong and a hard-nut in every respect, but you have a soft and graceful temperament. I have made a firm decision in my mind that, Oh Lord, the fetters in the form of delusions and attachments of this Tulsidas can be broken only if you so wish, otherwise not. [To wit, there is no other hope or chance of my breaking free from the vicious cycle of birth and death, and obtain liberation from this mundane world of miseries except by your kindness, grace and compassion.] (5).

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(7.11) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 143:

(143)

सुनहु राम रघुबीर गुसाई, मन अनीति-रत मेरो।
 चरन-सरोज बिसारि तिहारे, निसिदिन फिरत अनेरो॥1॥
 मानत नाहिं निगम-अनुसासन, त्रास न काहू केरो।
 भूल्यो सूल करम-कोलुन्ह तिल ज्यों बहु बारनि पेरो॥2॥
 जहँ सतसंग कथा माधवकी, सपनेहुँ करत न फेरो।
 लोभ-मोह-मद-काम-कोह-रत, तिन्हसों प्रेम घनेरो॥3॥
 पर-गुन सुनत दाह, पर-दूषन सुनत हरख बहुतेरो।
 आप पापको नगर बसावत, सहि न सकत पर खेरो॥4॥
 साधन-फल, श्रुति-सार नाम तव, भव-सरिता कहँ बेरो।
 सो पर-कर काँकिनी लागि सठ, बेंचि होत हठि चेरो॥5॥
 कबहुँक हौं संगति-प्रभावतें, जाउँ सुमारग नेरो।
 तब करि क्रोध संग कुमनोरथ देत कठिन भटभेरो॥6॥
 इक हौं दीन, मलीन, हीनमति, बिपतिजाल अति घेरो।
 तापर सहि न जाय करुनानिधि, मनको दुसह दरेरो॥7॥
 हरि पर्यो करि जतन बहुत बिधि, तातें कहत सबेरो।
 तुलसिदास यह त्रास मिटै जब हृदय करहु तुम डेरो॥8॥

(143)

sunahu rāma raghubīra gusā'īm, mana anīti-rata mērō.
 carana-sarōja bisāri tihārē, nisidina phirata anērō. 1.
 mānata nāhiṁ nigama-anusāsana, trāsa na kāhū kērō.
 bhūlyō sūla karama-kōlunha tila jyōm bahu bārani pērō. 2.
 jaham̐ sataśaṅga kathā mādhavakī, sapanēhum̐ karata na phērō.
 lōbha-mōha-mada-kāma-kōha-rata, tinhasōm̐ prēma ghanērō. 3.
 para-guna sunata dāha, para-dūṣana sunata harakha bahutērō.
 āpa pāpakō nagara basāvata, sahi na sakata para khērō. 4.
 sādhana-phala, śruti-sāra nāma tava, bhava-saritā kaham̐ bērō.
 sō para-kara kām̐kinī lāgi saṭha, bēnci hōta haṭhi cērō. 5.
 kabahum̐ka hauṁ saṅgati-prabhāvatēm̐, jā'um̐ sumāraga nērō.
 taba kari krōdha saṅga kumanōratha dēta kaṭhina bhaṭabhērō. 6.
 ika hauṁ dīna, malīna, hīnamati, bipatijāla ati ghērō.
 tāpara sahi na jāya karunānidhi, manakō dusaha darērō. 7.
 hari paryō kari jatana bahuta bidhi, tātēm̐ kahata sabērō.
 tulasidāsa yaha trāsa miṭai jaba hṛdaya karahu tuma ḍērō. 8.

Verse no. 143—Listen Lord Ram Raghubir (Sri Ram, the brave and valiant Lord of the Raghu's line of kings; “rāma raghubīra gusā'īm”); listen to me!

My mind is engrossed and submerged in doing injustice of all kinds (i.e. it is involved in unrighteous thoughts, and it allows me to conduct myself in an improper way).

I have forgotten (about the bliss and comfort that are available at) your lotus-like holy feet, and instead unfortunately wander aimlessly among the pleasures of the sensual objects of this material world.¹ (1).

[¹To wit, instead of seeking the pristine kind of nectar of sublime bliss and pure joy that are enduring in nature and of the best quality, and which are available in abundance at your your holy feet, which I can easily access by worshipping you and surrendering my self before your divine feet to seek your grace and mercy, I am so stupidly seeking comfort and pleasure in the external gross world of sense objects which give something that is not only superficial and transient but also the cause of many other problems of which I am immediately not aware, but which nevertheless lurk in the darkness and ready to pounce upon me at the slightest pretext.]

My mind is so arrogant and stubborn that neither does it listen to the advice given by the Vedas (the ancient scriptures), nor is it afraid of anybody or anything else. [To wit, it is not even affright of punishment for its misdemeanours and reckless attitude.]

It has been crushed and has suffered repeatedly in the grinding machine representing the deeds done by it and their effects much like the mustard seed that is crushed for extracting its oil, but still in its ignorance or stupidity it has forgotten that suffering and once again resumed its old habits.² (2).

[²The Vedas and wise men have always advised the mind to refrain from thinking of and doing evil deeds as they have a cumulative bad effect that robs the mind of its comfort, peace and happiness for which it gets involved in these deeds in the first place. The mind has repeatedly gone through the evil effects or the punishment that comes with such deeds, but it is so foolish that it once again does the

same thing which had made it suffer so horribly in the past. It has experienced how pursuing this material world has never gotten it its peace and happiness for which it ran after the world, but have caused it constant misery and grief instead. In spite of this bad experience and knowledge, my mind still runs after this world to seek comfort and pleasure in it.]

When there is a congregation of saints and pious people where holy stories of Lord Sri Ram are narrated (i.e. sung and told and their subtle spiritual messages explained), this mind would never think of going there even in its dreams. [The mind feels bored in these places and it tends to avoid such communities of saints and holy people.]

Instead, the mind shows more affinity and likeness for, and it loves to be in the company of those (*tinhasōm prēma ghanērō*) who are engrossed and indulgent in all the evil tendencies associated with this gross existence, such as having all sorts of worldly greed, avarice, covetousness, attachments, pride, vanity, haughtiness, lust, passion, anger, spite, malice, discord, hatred etc. (*lōbha-mōha-mada-kāma-kōha-rata*) (3).

Hearing about the good character and virtues of others, the mind burns with the fire of jealousy and envy, and on hearing about the faults and vices (and the consequent suffering) of others, it exults and becomes extremely glad (and wishes to hear more of it).

It is developing a city of sins and vices for its self, but it can't tolerate to see even a small hamlet (Khera) of others' sins and vices.³ (4).

[³To wit, the mind, ridden with a fattened sense of vanity and ego, thinks that it is extremely righteous and without any trace of faults in it, though it is ridden with all the evils one can imagine of. Overlooking its own shortcomings, it magnifies even the smallest trace of negativity and bad trait in others. It has a profane tendency to criticise others and pricks holes with even the trifling sins and faults of others, whereas it neglects, overlooks or ignores its own huge tranche of similar shortcomings.]

Oh Lord; your holy name 'RAM' (pronounced "RAAM") is the fruit of all Sadhans (various spiritual means and methods that one undertakes to attain liberation, deliverance, salvation and emancipation); it is the essence of the Vedas (i.e. it is what the scriptures preach and prescribe); and it is like a sturdy ship to help one cross this huge and turbulent river symbolising this mundane world of transmigration.

It's such an irony that this wicked wretch known as the 'mind', in spite of knowing all this, prefers to roam about selling such a great and holy Name of yours to others for worthless pennies of the material world in exchange, and allows its self to become their slave in return.⁴ (5).

[⁴Tulsidas here refers to professional preachers and pseudo holy men who literally go about hawking, or 'selling', the divine name of God to earn money, followers and fame for themselves in this world. They don't realise that it is like bartering a priceless gem for worthless piece of glass, of exchanging nectar for dirty water. And of course it is their mind that is the main culprit to be blamed in this scenario, as it is the mind that drives and motivates a creature to do anything at all. Why, couldn't the mind tell such people that what they intend to do, and what they are actually doing, is utterly wrong and detrimental to their own spiritual welfare, not to speak of the burden of sins that they are accumulating by misleading others for their selfish material gains?]

For instance, ‘milk’ is meant to nourish the body, and it is not to be misused by using it as a ‘washing medium’ for the gross body, for which we have plentiful supply of ‘water’ instead. Its extremely stupid, arrogant, extravagant and horrifying to imagine to waste milk this way when it can instead be used to feed so many hungry and undernourished and under-privileged children.]

If by the good effects of the community of saints I happen to be affected and somehow manage to go near or towards the path of God, then this mind plays the spoil-sport by arousing in me a sense of longing and attachment for a number of material things of this world along with their incumbent pleasures and comforts. These temptations are so overwhelming that I fail to resist them, and I fall for this enticement, and lured by them I get pushed and shoved into a dark pit of negativity and bad traits so typical of this mundane gross world, such as inculcating in myself different kinds of desires, perversions, depravity, decadence, immorality, and many other such vices.⁵ (6).

[⁵Tulsidas says that if by some good chance a person happens to come in contact with saints and becomes wisely aware of the importance of not getting entangled in the material world because its charms are transient and bring more grief to the person than the comfort it seems to give him, the unfaithful mind immediately intervenes and plots against him. The mind somehow prevails upon the still-undecided and wavering man, who is accustomed to enjoying the fantastic world, that the charms of the world are not only astounding but also available now and here for him to enjoy as compared to the happiness and joy that he would get sometime in the distant future by following the path of God, and perhaps he may not get what he wants at all by the latter path which he has not yet tested.

If this man is not of a firm resolution and wise, if he has no confidence in the truthfulness of saints and in what they teach selflessly for the spiritual welfare of others, if he doubts them and the scriptures as well, it is sure that he would fall in the trap of temptations that the mind lays out for him with respect to the world and its many physical charms and attractions in a very enticing manner.

So what happens is that this unfortunate man is misled by his own mind and he gets bored in the company of saints; he would rather enjoy sitting and gossiping with those who talk endlessly about the material world. This latter company will leave its own indelible mark on his character—such as having vices of various kinds, having desires, greed, lust, impatience, anger, depravity and decadence, immorality and perversion, and so on and so forth.]

Oh my Lord who is a mine of kindness and mercy (*karunānidhi*)! I am already suffering so much from the pitiable condition of miseries and pains inflicted upon me due to my being associated with existence in this gross mundane world in which I find myself (and unable to tear myself away from it), and my miseries are further compounded by this rascal mind of mine which is subjecting me to greater push towards this world, and forcefully shoving me into a pit of more miseries and pains. I am unable to counter its (mind’s) offensive because I am so weak and humble, so helpless and hapless. [So, oh Lord, please have pity on me and save me from this horror created by my mind.]⁶ (7).

[⁶Tulsidas says that he is unable to fight back or resist the temptations which are constantly pushing and nudging at his mind and intellect. Due to the weakening effects of Kaliyug, he has lost the strength and courage to withstand this assault. He

can win this war if only Sri Ram helps him to control his mind and overcome its evil designs.]

I have tried numerous ways and have lost courage and hope. Therefore, I tell you at the outset, that this fear of Tulsidas (arising out of the horrible torments of birth and death) can only be removed and mitigated if you make your abode (i.e. take up permanent residence) in his heart.⁷ (8).

[⁷As is evident here, the saintly Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram to live in his heart permanently in a subtle form. This is achieved by constantly remembering the Lord and feeling his divine presence at all times of one's life. This will ensure that the person not only feels blessed and blissful in his life, having a true friend in the form of the Lord with him to help him at all times, but he also would automatically guard himself against any evil thoughts coming into his mind as his mind will now be engaged in the thoughts and memory of the Lord who is without any corruption.

Just as a vacant or empty mind is the workshop of devil which leads to the ruin of the man, a mind occupied by the Lord is a workshop which prepares the man for his eternal good and everlasting welfare.]

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(7.12) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 149:

Pleading with Lord Śrī Rāma

(149)

कहाँ जाऊँ, कासों कहौं, और ठौर न मेरे।
जनम गँवायो तेरे ही द्वार किंकर तेरे॥1॥
मैं तो बिगारी नाथ सों आरतिके लीन्हें।
तोहि कृपानिधि क्यों बनै मेरी-सी कीन्हें॥2॥
दिन-दुरदिन दिन-दुरदसा, दिन-दुख दिन दूषन।
जब लौं तू न बिलोकिहैं रघुबंस-बिभूषन॥3॥
दर्ई पीठ बिनु डीठ मैं तुम बिस्व-बिलोचन।
तो सों तुही न दूसरो नत-सोच-बिमोचन॥4॥
पराधीन देव दीन हौं, स्वाधीन गुसाईं।
बोलनिहारे सों करे बलि बिनयकी झाई॥5॥
आपु देखि मोहि देखिये जन मानिय साँचो।
बड़ी ओट रामनामकी जेहि लई सो बाँचो॥6॥
रहनि रीति राम रावरी नित हिय हुलसी है।
ज्यों भावै त्यों करु कृपा तेरो तुलसी है॥5॥

(149)

kahām jā'um, kāsōm kahaurm, aura ṭhaura na mērē.
 janama gamvāyō tērē hī dvāra kinkara tērē. 1.
 mairm tō bigārī nātha sōm āratikē līnhēm.
 tōhi kṛpānidhi kyōm banai mērī-sī kīnhēm. 2.
 dina-duradina dina-duradasā, dina-dukha dina dūṣana.
 jaba laurm tū na bilōkhaiṛm raghubansa-bibhūṣana. 3.
 daī pīṭha binu ḍīṭha mairm tuma bisva-bilōcana.
 tō sōm tuhī na dūsarō nata-sōca-bimōcana. 4.
 parādhīna dēva dīna haurm, svādhīna gusāīṛm.
 bōlanihārē sōm karai bali binayakī jhāīṛm. 5.
 āpu dēkhi mōhi dēkhiyē jana māniya sāmṣō.
 baī ōṭa rāmanāmakī jēhi laī sō bāmṣō. 6.
 rahani rīti rāma rāvarī nita hiya hulasī hai.
 jyōm bhāvai tyaurm karu kṛpā tērō tulasī hai. 5.

Verse no. 149—Oh Lord, where should I go, whom should I tell about my woes and miseries? I don't have any other destination or point of refuge and shelter (or a friend with whom I can share my problems and agonies). This humble servant (follower, devotee) of yours has spent his life and time lying at your doorstep or doorway (janama gamvāyō tērē hī dvāra).¹ (1).

[¹Tulsidas tells his Lord Ram that he has spent his entire life under the patronage and shelter of the latter, and he has nowhere else to go. He knows none else but his very own Lord Ram, and he has never gone to anyone else in his life to seek anything whatsoever either. So, in front of whom should he now plead about his worries and miseries except the only Lord he knows and has faith in?

The word “dvāra” literally means a door, and the phrase “janama gamvāyō” means to spend one's life. Hence, Tulsidas here means that the devotee of the Lord has spent his entire time and life close to the Lord, had been loyal and faithful to the Lord, and had never sought any help of any kind from anyone else except his chosen Lord. This has invariably created a close and strong bond of kinship between the devotee and the Lord, a bond that is irrefutable, unbreakable and irrevocable. Therefore there is no question of the devotee pleading with anyone else about his problems now, except before the only Lord he knows in his life, and it is Lord Ram.]

If I had ruined (corrupted) my deeds, oh Lord, it is because I was worried, agitated and terrified by my sorrows and tribulations under the given set of circumstances and situations I had faced in my life.²

But oh merciful, if you reward me according to my deeds, then what would happen (to me and to your own reputation)?³ (2).

[²When confronted with uncertainties and suddenness of developments that befell me during my course in life, I lost my wits and sense of wisdom and judgement. As a result, I did commit errors by way of doing deeds that I oughtn't have done at all. But oh Lord, I am after all an ordinary human being with his normal failings, shortcomings and limitations. I am not some enlightened sage who would be careful with every step he took in life. I accept that I had lost my wits and could not judge what is good or bad for me when I did anything.

³Oh Lord, if you just simply take into account what my deeds are and punish me for them without taking into consideration my low level of intellect and wisdom, my humbleness and my panicky state at the time when I faced problems in life that seemed so huge to me that I wanted to save myself with any means I could urgently think of then, I lost my bearing of mind and wits, and may have acted utterly wrongly and committed sins which I should not have, then it would go against your declared vows and your time tested reputation that you extend your helping hand, show mercy and compassion as well as forgive all the misdeeds and mischief of those who have surrendered themselves before you, who have taken refuge and shelter with you, who have nowhere else to go except you, who are unpretentious and have relented, and who have frankly and honestly accepted their misdeeds and beg you for forgiveness.

This being the case, I fit the bill perfectly, and therefore you must show mercy upon me. Though my deeds are very bad, though they are all corrupted, pervert, evil and decadent so much so that there is no chance of any good reward or merit accruing to me ever, but here fortunately comes your gracious and merciful nature into play: It's your established reputation that you forgive and help such vile fellows as me, and hence I am sure of expecting relief and freedom from my troubles when I beg and plead with you.]

Oh the most exalted, the most honourable and the noblest member in the family of king Raghu of Ayodhya (“raghubansa-bibhūṣana”; a reference to Lord Ram)! Till the time you do not look at me with your merciful and compassionate glance, there will be regular bad times, routine miserable days, constant fear of misfortunes and ill fate, daily round of sorrows, troubles and plight, and constant blemishes, blames and accusations that would haunt me every moment of my existence.

[To wit, the only way I can find freedom from my agonies and miseries, and feel fearless and redeemed, is when you, dear Lord, would look at me benevolently and mercifully. Then all my misfortunes will vanish.] (3).

That I have shown you my back (turned against you, or have neglected or opposed you) is because I am without a foresight, am blind and ignorant (and stupid to the core).

But I don't understand how you can copy my behaviour by being against me or turning your back to me, or neglecting me. You see the whole world (i.e. you provide vision, sight and light symbolising wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment to the entire creation), so how can you be opposed to or be against me?

You are one in your own likeness (i.e. you are one of your kind and have no match anywhere in this world) as far as removing the sorrows, miseries, troubles and tribulations of the humble, weak, distressed and wretched ones is concerned.⁴ (4).

[⁴Tulsidas means that since he is an ordinary man, there is no surprise in his acting in the stupid way he has done in his life, even at times neglecting the Lord himself who had been the provider of succour and daily bread to Tulsidas. But the Lord must realise that he is not the same as Tulsidas; he must realise that he occupies a high pedestal and is the King of all his subjects in this vast creation; that he ought to act wisely and with a lot of understanding and prudence; that he must show a lot of patience, broadheartedness, benevolence, forgiveness, mercy, grace and compassion befitting a great King and Emperor. The Lord cannot afford to be shortsighted, selfish, imprudent, impatient and mean.

Therefore, inspite of the selfish ways Tulsidas may have acted personally, the Lord must overlook such small transgressions of behaviour like a loving father does while dealing with his son who may not have learned proper ways of conduct yet.]

Oh Lord! I am dependant, lowly and humble, while you are independent, master and the exalted Lord of one and all. [To wit, I am bonded to my deeds past and present, to the circumstances of life, to the countless traits, both good and bad, that are inherently present in me as part of my nature and temparement as a human being, and to the bonds that exist between my physical body and the world. But these limitations do not apply to the Lord, for he is the independent and supreme Lord God of creation.]

I say truthfully to you, how can a shadow speak to the speaker who is consciousness personified, who is an embodiment of the supreme, absolute and formless Truth known as 'pure Consciousness'. [Here, the 'shadow' is Tulsidas, and the 'speaker' is the Supreme Lord himself in the form of Sri Ram who resides in Tulsidas' heart as the life-giving soul which is nothing but pure consciousness, and without whom Tulsidas would be as good as dead.] (5).

Hence oh Lord, first see at yourself (realise your true nature as being merciful and compassionate) and then look at me (as your faithful shadow or servant, one who follows you wherever you go). Then only you would treat me as truthful and honest.⁵

The protective shield of Sri Ram's name is very strong, robust, potent and infallible. Anyone who has taken the refuge of Lord Sri Ram's name has been saved (from the cycle of birth and death, and being trapped in this mundane, mortal and gross existence) (6).

[⁵To wit, judge me yourself and don't believe what I say at its face value. See, I have followed you faithfully throughout my life, come what may, just like a shadow follows a person. Now tell me: can the shadow or the person abandon each other? Of course not; they have an eternal bond that ties them together.

Besides this, the shadow is always dark and inconsequential, while the person who forms this shadow is a conscious and living entity. So oh Lord, in the same manner, there is no comparison between me and you. And therefore you ought to neglect my shortcomings and darkness of character just like a person overlooks his own dark shadow.]

Oh Lord Sri Ram! The thoughts of your excellent characters, noble bearing, benevolent nature, great reputation and virtuous deeds are all arising in my heart to create exultation, euphoria, delight and happiness for me.

Thinking of them, I feel delighted in my heart that all my desires would now be fulfilled, and all my trials and tribulations would now come to an end. [Here, Tulsidas refers not to worldly desires, but the desire for having devotion and attaining liberation and salvation for his self].

Just remember that this Tulsidas belongs to you oh Lord (for he is your faithful and ardent devotee). Have mercy and compassion upon him in anyway you deem fit and convenient. (7).

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(7.13) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 160:

Tulasīdāsa seeks refuge in Lord Rāma's Holy feet

(160)

मैं हरि पतित-पावन सुने ।
 मैं पतित तुम पतित-पावन दोउ बानक बने ॥1॥
 ब्याध गनिका गज अजामिल साखि निगमनि भने ।
 और अधम अनेक तारे जात कापै गने ॥2॥
 जानि नाम अजानि लीन्हें नरक सुरपुर मने ।
 दासतुलसी सरन आयो, राखिये आपने ॥3॥

(160)

maiṁ hari patita-pāvana sunē.
 maiṁ patita tuma patita-pāvana dō'u bānaka banē. 1.
 byādha ganikā gaja ajāmila sākhi nigamani bhanē.
 aura adhama anēka tārē jāta kāpai ganē. 2.
 jāni nāma ajāni līnhēm naraka surapura manē.
 dāsatuslāsī sarana āyō, rākhiyē āpanē. 3.

Verse no. 160—Oh Lord Hari! I have heard that you are the purifier and an uplifter of the downtrodden, the wretched, the sinful and the lowly persons. Now, since I am the latter type of person while you are the Lord with the aforementioned qualities, a good rapport is deemed to have been established between us two; verily, it is a good combination that makes us immediately compatible with each other.¹ (1).

[¹To wit, it is your declared vow that you purify the sinful and are the best friend of the humble and lowly persons, and I am honestly one such person who fits the bill perfectly. Therefore, I am a good candidate who must benefit from your largesse and granting of boons in this respect. Hence, I don't have doubt now that I would become purified by all means, and that all my sins, evils and misdeeds would be neutralised. I expect succour and solace from you; I hope you will redeem me and salvage my future from ruin and misery.]

The Vedas bear witness that you have helped the cruel hunter-cum-bandit (i.e. Valmiki), Ganika (the prostitute named Pingla), the Elephant (called Gaja), Ajamil (the sinful Brahmin), and numerous other lowly, wretched, sinful, downtrodden and wicked ones to cross the ocean symbolised by this mundane world of transmigration².

Verily, the list of such souls that have got liberation and deliverance at your

hands is long and legendary. Say, who can keep a count of such instances (that show your mercy, grace, benevolence and kindness upon the lowly, the hopeless, the distressed and the sinful)? (2).

Those who have uttered your holy name (even once), either consciously or unconsciously (i.e. willingly or unwillingly), are freed from the compulsion of entering either the hell or the heaven².

Realising the truth of all this, Tulsidas has come to your holy feet (seeking shelter and refuge). So oh Lord, please be kind to accept him also (as you have done other sinful ones listed herein above in this verse) (3).

[²To wit, every individual is bound to suffer the consequences of what he does in his present life. If the majority of his deeds and actions are good and righteous and they weigh more in his favour as compared to his isolated misdeeds, his soul goes to heaven to enjoy the rewards. And it goes to hell to suffer punishment if the evil deeds outweigh the good ones. In the case of those who surrender themselves to Lord Ram and use the medicine of the Lord's holy name, then all their spiritual diseases are taken care of, and upon shedding their mortal body their soul gets final rest. Such persons get final rest for themselves, and their soul finds eternal emancipation and salvation. They are permanently freed from the cycle of birth and death. They reach a state of existence that transcends such lowly levels as hell or even the better level of the heaven, for in both the cases the soul has to come back to this gross world by taking another birth once the effects of its past life that has made it go either to the heaven or the hell wears off. But the glory of Lord Ram's holy name is such that it takes the soul much higher to a level where it merges or coalesces with its parent Soul that is known as the 'Parmatma' or the Supreme Soul of this creation, from where it need not come down to this gross existence any more.]

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

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(7.14) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 162:

Lord Rāma's Generosity

Rāga Sōraṭha

(162)

ऐसो को उदार जग माहीं ।
 बिनु सेवा जो द्रवै दीनपर राम सरिस कोउ नाहीं ॥1॥
 जो गति जोग बिराग जतन करि नहिं पावत मुनि ग्यानी ।
 सो गति देत गीध सबरी कहँ प्रभु न बहुत जिय जानी ॥2॥
 जो संपति दस सीस अरप करि रावन सिव पहुँ लीन्हीं ।
 सो संपदा बिभीषन कहँ अति सकुच—सहित हरि दीन्हीं ॥3॥
 तुलसिदास सब भाँति सकल सुख जो चाहसि मन मेरो ।
 तौ भजु राम, काम सब पूरन करै कृपानिधि तेरो ॥4॥

(162)

aisō kō udāra jaga māhīm.
 binu sēvā jō dravai dīnapara rāma sarisa kō'u nāhīm. 1.
 jō gati jōga birāga jatana kari nahīm pāvata muni gyānī.
 sō gati dēta gīdha sabarī kaham̐ prabhu na bahuta jiya jānī. 2.
 jō sampati dasa sīsa arapa kari rāvana siva paham̐ līnhīm.
 sō sampadā bibhīṣana kaham̐ ati sakuca-sahita hari dīnhīm. 3.
 tulasidāsa saba bhām̐ti sakala sukha jō cāhasi mana mērō.
 tau bhaju rāma, kāma saba pūrana karaim̐ kṛpānidhi tērō. 4.

Verse no. 162—Who is so generous, liberal, large-hearted and magnanimous in this world (except Lord Ram) that he becomes full of pity, compassion and mercy immediately on seeing those who are miserable, tormented, sorrowful, meek, lowly and humble?

In all sooth and without any gainsay, indeed it is Lord Sri Ram, and no one else; truly there is no one like him! (1).

The ultimate state (destination, abode) of the soul (i.e. attainment of emancipation and salvation—which is not easily available even to the great and wise hermits, sages, ascetics and mystics etc. by practicing penances, austerities, renunciation and other such prescribed paths (by which one can reach one's spiritual goal in life)—was made available to the vulture (Jatau) and Sabari (the old tribal woman) by Lord Sri Ram. In spite of this noble and glorious deed, the Lord never kept it in his mind nor did he

ever mention it to anyone, but rather felt that it was not enough (and he should have given them something more).² (2).

[²Tulsidas means here that though the Lord granted such an exalted stature to both Jatau and Sabari as attaining 'Moksha', or salvation and emancipation for their souls, he kept it to himself and never publicised it. These two had no chance of ever getting any spiritual reward worth the name because they hadn't done any mentionable meritorious deed in their lives, what to talk of attaining emancipation and salvation which is the highest level of achievement a creature can hope for his soul. They were sinful, as Jatau was a meat-eating vulture by birth, and Sabari was an outcaste tribal women of low birth.

Inspite of the gracious Lord granting them a magnificent spiritual reward that is difficult for even great sages and hermits to get, he felt hesitant and shy because he thought it was not sufficient a reward for them, and that he ought to have granted them something more.

Indeed, Lord Ram is so modest and kind in his heart that he never ever boasts of his gifts to his devotees and dependants; he does not want to embarrass the recipients of his grace by making public what they have received from the Lord.]

The huge wealth and the great realm (of the kingdom of Lanka) which Ravana (the demon king) had received as a boon from Lord Shiva by offering his heads ten times to the Lord to please him, the same property, wealth and realm was given to Vibhishan by Lord Sri Ram most hesitantly and shyly (as if it was not enough, for the Lord thought that Vibhishan should have been given more than this).³ (3).

[³Ravana had done severe Tapa (penance) to receive blessings of 'freedom from death and Lordship over the demon kingdom' from Lord Shiva. During the course of doing Tapa he had offered the Lord his head ten times, one by one, as sacrificial offerings. When he had done it nine times, and was about to do it for the tenth time, Lord Shiva was so pleased at his 'self-sacrifice' that he appeared before Ravana and granted him a boon that he will not only get back his lost ten heads, but would also never die if someone severs his head umpteen number of times during a one-to-one duel. So it happened that during the war at Lanka, no matter how hard Lord Ram tried to kill him by severing his heads by shooting powerful arrows at Ravana, the heads immediately grew back again, utterly confounding the Lord.

During the build-up days prior to the epic war of Lanka, Vibhishan had tried his best to make his stubborn elder brother Ravana see reason and mend his attitude to avoid a ruinous war. But Ravana wouldn't pay heed. One day when Ravana had humiliated his younger brother Vibhishan publicly in full court by kicking him and telling him to go to exile immediately because the latter had tried to give sane advice to his elder brother to avoid bloodshed by giving Sita back to Lord Ram and make peace with him, Vibhishan decided enough was enough, and he came to Lord Ram to surrender himself before the Lord and seek the latter's protection.

At that time, Lord Ram had warmly welcomed him inspite of grave reservations expressed by his advisors who warned the Lord that it was dangerous and risky to keep an enemy's brother in their camp. The Lord however felt that he is obliged to give refuge to Vibhishan as the latter was distressed and had come to him seeking shelter and protection that the Lord just cannot refuse to anyone, as it was his declared vow that he would give refuge and protection to those who come to him

seeking it, irrespective of who they were and what the situation was that precipitated it.

During the course of preliminary introduction, when the Lord learnt how injustice had been meted out to Vibhishan by his own brother Ravana for no fault of his, the Lord decided to punish the offender (Ravana) and undo the damage by anointing Vibhishan as the next king of Lanka. It was also a gracious gesture on the part of Lord Ram to reward Vibhishan for being righteous and pious throughout his life, as well as for being the Lord's ardent devotee who had the courage and the perseverance to maintain devotion for the Lord even while living in Lanka, surrounded by fierce demons who were avowed opponents of the Lord.

This entire story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 40—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.]

Tulsidas advises his Mana (mind) when he says, 'Oh my mind (mana mērō)! If you wish to have all possible happiness and joy in this world, if you wish to feel delighted and blissful, then listen to my sane advice: you should worship, adore and have abiding devotion for Lord Sri Ram. The gracious Lord, who is an ocean of mercy, kindness and compassion, will surely and without doubt fulfil all your wishes.' (4).

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

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(7.15) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 164:

Lord Ram gives precedence to Devotion above everything else

(164)

जानत प्रीति—रीति रघुराई ।
 नाते सब हाते करि राखत, राम सनेह—सगाई ॥1॥
 नेह निबाहि देह तजि दसरथ, कीरति अचल चलाई ।
 ऐसेहु पितु तें अधिक गीधपर ममता गुन गरुआई ॥2॥
 तिय—बिरही सुग्रीव सखा लखि प्रानप्रिया बिसराई ।
 रन पर्यो बंधु बिभीषन ही को, सोच हृदय अधिकाई ॥3॥
 घर गुरुगृह प्रिय सदन सासुरे, भइ जब जहँ पहुनाई ।
 तब तहँ कहि सबरीके फलनिकी रुचि माधुरी न पाई ॥4॥
 सहज सरूप कथा मुनि बरनत रहत सकुचि सिर नाई ।
 केवट मीत कहे सुख मानत बानर बंधु बड़ाई ॥5॥

प्रेम—कनौड़ो रामसो प्रभु त्रिभुवन तिहुँकाल न भाई।
 तेरो रीनी हौं कह्यो कपि सों ऐसी मानिहि को सेवकाई ॥6॥
 तुलसी राम—सनेह—सील लखि, जो न भगति उर आई।
 तौ तोहिं जनमि जाय जननी जड़ तनु—तरुनता गवाई ॥7॥

(164)

jānata prīti-rīti raghurā'ī.
 nātē saba hātē kari rākhata, rāma sanēha-sagā'ī. 1.
 nēha nibāhi dēha taji dasaratha, kīrati acala calā'ī.
 aisēhu pitu tēm adhika gīdhapara mamatā guna garu'ā'ī. 2.
 tiya-birahī sugrīva sakhā lakhi prānapriyā bisarā'ī.
 rana paryō bandhu bibhīṣana hī kō, sōca hr̥daya adhikā'ī. 3.
 ghara gurugr̥ha priya sadana sāsūrē, bha'i jaba jaham̐ pahunā'ī.
 taba taham̐ kahi sabarīkē phalanikī ruci mādhuṛī na pā'ī. 4.
 sahaja sarūpa kathā muni baranata rahata sakuci sira nā'ī.
 kēvaṭa mīta kahē sukha mānata bānara bandhu baṛā'ī. 5.
 prēma-kanauṛō rāmasō prabhu tribhuvana tihumkāla na bhā'ī.
 tērō rinī haur̥m kahyō kapi sōm̐ aisī mānihi kō sēvakā'ī. 6.
 tulasī rāma-sanēha-sīla lakhi, jō na bhagati ura ā'ī.
 tau tōhim̐ janami jāya janani jāra tanu-tarunatā gavām̐. 7.

Verse no. 164—Only Lord Sri Ram understands the real meaning and true essence of the laws that govern pure, truthful and spiritual love, affection and devotion.

In all sooth and without gainsay indeed, Lord Sri Ram keeps and recognises only the relationship of true spiritual love and devotion to the exclusion of all other relationships.¹ (1).

[¹Lord Ram gives precedence to the virtues of sincere devotion, undiluted affection and true spiritual love for the Lord over all other virtues and merits in the creature. If a person lacks these eclectic qualities in him, then no matter how hard he tries to please the Lord, he would not be successful even though he may otherwise be an excellent person by all other counts. Even the humblest, the poorest and those who lack any sort of abilities by which one would usually acquire religious merit in this world would be able to become favourite of Lord Ram if such a person has one simple quality in him: and it is to have true devotion and affection for the Lord.]

King Dasrath (the worldly father of Lord Ram and the king of the kingdom of Ayodhya) had died to uphold his love for Lord Ram, and had thereby established his fame for eternity, but the Lord had shown greater filial respect, more endearment, more affinity, more affection, more closeness and more love in his relationship with a vulture known as Jatau as compared to Dasrath. [This is because Jatau had immense devotion for the Lord, recognised him as the Supreme Being in a human form, and had laid down his life to serve the Lord as compared to Dasrath who showed love for the Lord more because the latter was his 'son' rather than because he was the Supreme Being, and Dasrath had died while being the cause of bringing much misery in the life of Lord Ram while Jatau had died trying to bring relief in the Lord's life.]² (2).

[²Lord Ram had left Dasrath wailing and lamenting when the latter succumbed to the pressure from his wife Kaikeyi, the junior queen, to send Lord Ram to forest exile for fourteen years along with his wife Sita and younger brother Laxman. In other words, Dasrath had been instrumental in causing untold hardships to his son Lord Ram inspite of professing so much love for the latter. In his comparison Jatau had laid down his life when he was killed by the demon king Ravana as he tried to save Sita from being taken away forcefully by him.

Besides this, Dasrath had forgotten in his delusions that Lord Ram was not an ordinary human prince born in his family but the Supreme Lord who had come to become his son only because in his previous life Dasrath had done severe Tapa to ask the Lord to grant him a boon that the latter would become his son so that he could love the Lord as a father would his son. In short, Dasrath treated Lord Ram as his ‘son’ rather than as a personified form of the Supreme Being.

When Dasrath died, he lamented and grieved for being separated from his ‘son’ whom he loved so very much and who had now gone to the forest, but he did not grieve for being separated from the ‘Supreme Being’ or being instrumental in causing so much hardship to the Lord.

In his stark comparison stood Jatau who had laid down his life to serve the Lord’s interests by trying to protect his wife from being abducted by a demon. Then when the time to die came, Jatau willingly embraced it because the Supreme Lord of the world was standing right in his front, a chance that even the greatest of sages and hermits don’t come to get.

Dasrath ‘loved’ Lord Ram as a father would love his son, while Jatau had ‘devotion’ for the Lord, and like a true devotee had laid down his life in the ‘service’ of the Lord, unlike Dasrath.

So, what was the result? Dasrath had not found emancipation after death, and he became a ‘Spirit’, a ‘ghost’; Dasrath’s soul did not immediately find its eternal rest and peace, till much later on when Lord Ram had himself blessed him at the end of the war of Lanka. Jatau on the other hand found instant salvation and emancipation for his soul as soon as he died.

The comparison between the fates of Dasrath and Jatau is also stark because the former died in a miserable condition and grieving for the loss of Lord Ram, while the latter died while lying in the laps of the same Lord as he lovingly caressed the wounded Jatau with his own hands and tended to his wounds personally.

Once again, while Jatau’s last rites were done by Lord Ram himself as befitting a son though the former was a lowly and a cadaver-eating vulture by birth, Dasrath was so unfortunate and condemned that he missed this golden opportunity of being cremated by the Lord though the latter was his own son from the perspective of this mortal gross world, resulting in Dasrath becoming a ghost.

In this connection, the reader is advised to refer to the following sections of Tulsidas’ epic narration of the story of the life and time of Lord Ram in “Ram Charit Manas” as follows: (a) regarding the incidents leading upto Dasrath’s death—Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 22—to Doha no. 79; and from Doha no. 147—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 157; (b) regarding Dasrath’s soul becoming a ghost and getting final liberation only when blessed by Lord Ram—Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede Doha no. 112; (c) regarding Jatau’s good deed, death and instant emancipation—Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 33.]

Seeing friend Sugriv's agonies at the separation from his wife, Lord Ram had but forgotten about his own sorrows of being separated from his wife Sita.³

Dear brother Laxman lay wounded and unconscious in the battle-field of Lanka, but (forgetting him for the moment) Lord Ram was extremely worried about the welfare and future of Vibhishan.⁴ (3).

[³When Lord Ram found Sugriv grieving for his wife because he had been separated from her as he was forcefully sent to exile by Baali, the Lord had forgotten about his own grief of separation from his wife Sita, and gave priority to remove the sorrows of Sugriv first by slaying the latter's elder brother Baali and restoring Sugriv's wife to him along with the kingdom of Kishkindha.

⁴The Lord was upset when Laxman lay gravely wounded in the battle-field of Lanka as the Lord feared that without his support it may be impossible to defeat and eliminate Ravana, the king of Lanka. In this eventuality, the Lord wondered what would happen to the fate of Vibhishan whom the Lord had already promised the crown of Lanka. This latter predicament weighed heavily in the sub-conscious mind of Lord Ram as he grieved for his wounded brother Laxman. To wit, the Lord was more concerned about the uncertain future of his devotee Vibhishan than the gravity of the loss of his own brother and the pain it would cause to him personally.

These two incidents are narrated in detail in "Ram Charit Manas" as follows: (a) regarding Sugriv—Kishkindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 4—to Doha no. 11; (b) regarding Lord Ram promising the crown of Lanka to Vibhishan—Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 8-10 that precede Doha no. 49; (c) regarding Laxman's falling in the battle-field of Lanka—Lanka Kand, Chaupai line nos. 7-8 that precede Doha no. 54; and (d) Lord Ram's grieving for Laxman—Doha no. 61 along with Chaupai nos. 1-18 that precede it.]

Whether at home, at the hermitage of Guru Vasistha, at the friends' places, or at the in-law's place—wherever Lord Ram was invited and served refreshments, he had always asserted that the sweetness he had felt and enjoyed in the (ordinary) plums offered to him by Sabari were not experienced ever again by him anywhere else!⁵ (4).

[⁵The Lord clearly hinted that though the plums offered by Sabari were not so sweet, and may be a bit sour also, but nevertheless he greatly relished eating them so much so that there is no comparison between the way he enjoyed those plums to the countless dainty sweets and other delectables offered to him wherever he was invited. The Lord declared that he still remembered relishing the plums more than any one or all of these refreshments combined.

Sabari was an old tribal woman who loved the Lord extremely as if he were her beloved son. When the Lord visited her hermitage, she offered him ordinary plums, but her devotion and affection for the Lord was so stupendous and pure that the Lord relished eating these ordinary plums as if they were the sweetest thing he had ever eaten in his life. The Lord wanted to please Sabari as she had nothing better to offer. The bitterness of the plums was replaced with the nectar of sweetness of Sabari's love and devotion for the Lord. Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 35.]

Oh Lord! When hermits, ascetics and sages start narrating your natural and true form (as the Supreme Being who is formless, attributeless, all-pervading cosmic Lord of this creation, the Lord who is the cause and an end of all creation), you feel shy to

hear yourself being praised so highly and you bow your head in humbleness and modesty.

But when lowly creatures such as monkeys (led by their king Sugriv) and Kewat (the boatman) call you a ‘friend’ or ‘brother’, you feel proud and obliged to them as if you were being honoured or praised immensely in a public forum.⁶ (5).

[⁶The greatness and the glory of Lord Ram lie in the fact that he feels joy at being recognised as a friend and a brother of the ordinary creatures, those who are simple, humble and meek, and not in being praised by learned sages for the Supreme Lord of the world.]

‘Oh Brother (bhāī)! [Tulsidas addresses the world in general here by calling all those who care to listen to him as his ‘brother’.] There is no one in all the three Lokas (the three divisions of the world; the heaven, the earth and the nether world) and the three time-periods (past, present, future) who can be easily endeared by or remains under the influence of pure love and devotion more than Lord Sri Ram.

It so happened that the Lord even went to the extent of declaring to Hanuman (who was a junior member of the monkey army that helped Lord Ram overcome the demons of Lanka), “I am highly indebted and obliged to you”.⁷

Say then, who else is there in this world except Lord Ram who would feel more easily grateful and so easily obliged for even the smallest of services rendered unto him by even the most ordinary of creatures? (6).’

[⁷Refer: (a) Vinai Patrika, verse no. 100, stanza no. 7; and (b) Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 32—to Chaupai line no. 4 that precedes Doha no. 33 (when Hanuman had brought the news of Sita from Lanka); and Lanka Kand, Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 62 when Hanuman had brought the herb which helped to revive Laxman back to life.]

[Now, addressing himself, Tulsidas says—] ‘Oh Tulsidas! Even after seeing or observing or learning about such a lovable, endearing, affectionate, gracious and obliging nature and temperment of Lord Ram, about the Lord’s exemplary virtues, his warm and welcoming nature, and his noble characters, if devotion does not arise in your heart, then surely your mother had wasted her adulthood in conceiving and giving birth to you!’ (7).

[⁸Here Tulsidas addresses himself to say that it is worthless for him to have taken birth, and it would have been better if his mother had not conceived him at all, if he did not or could not develop devotion, faith, love and affection for Lord Sri Ram.]

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

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(7.16) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 166:

Lord Rāma's Benevolent, Merciful and Compassionate Nature

(166)

ऐसे राम दीन-हितकारी ।
 अतिकोमल करुनानिधान बिनु कारन पर-उपकारी ॥1॥
 साधन-हीन दीन निज अघ-बस, सिला भई मुनि-नारी ।
 गृहतें गवनि परसि पद पावन घोर सापतें तारी ॥2॥
 हिंसारत निषाद तामस बपु, पसु-समान बनचारी ।
 भेंट्यो हृदय लगाइ प्रेमबस, नहिं कुल जाति बिचारी ॥3॥
 जद्यपि द्रोह कियो सुरपति-सुत, कहि न जाय अति भारी ।
 सकल लोक अवलोकि सोकहत, सरन गये भय टारी ॥4॥
 बिहंग जोनि आमिष अहारपर, गीध कौन ब्रतधारी ।
 जनक-समान क्रिया ताकी निज कर सब भाँति सँवारी ॥5॥
 अधम जाति सबरी जोषित जड़, लोक-वेद तें न्यारी ।
 जानि प्रीति, दै दरस कृपानिधि, सोउ रघुनाथ उधारी ॥6॥
 कपि सुग्रीव बंधु-भय-व्याकुल, आयो सरन पुकारी ।
 सहि न सके दारुन दुख जनके, हत्यो बालि, सहि गारी ॥7॥
 रिपुको अनुज बिभीषन निसिचर, कौन भजन अधिकारी ।
 सरन गये आगे है लीन्ह्यो भेंट्यो भुजा पसारी ॥8॥
 असुभ होइ जिन्हके सुमिरे ते बानर रीछ बिकारी ।
 बेद-बिदित पावन किये ते सब, महिमा नाथ! तुम्हारी ॥9॥
 कहँ लगि कहाँ दीन अगनित जिन्हकी तुम बिपति निवारी ।
 कलिमल-ग्रसित दास-तुलसी पर, काहे कृपा बिसारी? ॥10॥

(166)

aisē rāma dīna-hitakārī.
 atikōmala karunānidhāna binu kārana para-upakārī. 1.
 sādhana-hīna dīna nija agha-basa, silā bha'ī muni-nārī.
 gr̥hatēm gavani parasi pada pāvana ghōra sāpatēm tārī. 2.
 hinsārata niṣāda tāmasa bapu, pasu-samāna banacārī.
 bhēṇṭyō hr̥daya lagā'i prēmabasa, nahim̐ kula jāti bicārī. 3.
 jadyapi drōha kiyō surapati-suta, kahi na jāya ati bhārī.
 sakala lōka avalōki sōkahata, sarana gayē bhaya ṭārī. 4.
 biham̐ga jōni āmiṣa ahārapara, gīdha kauna bratadhārī.
 janaka-samāna kriyā tākī nija kara saba bhām̐ti samvārī. 5.
 adhama jāti sabarī jōṣita jaṛa, lōka-vēda tēm n'yārī.
 jāni prīti, dai darasa kṛpānidhi, sō'u raghunātha udhārī. 6.
 kapi sugrīva bandhu-bhaya-vyākula, āyō sarana pukārī.
 sahi na sakē dārūna dukha janakē, hatyō bālī, sahi gārī. 7.
 ripukō anuja bibhīṣana nisicara, kauna bhajana adhikārī.

sarana gayē āgē hvai līnhyōm bhēṇṭyō bhujā pasārī. 8.
 asubha hō'i jinhakē sumirē tē bānara rīcha bikārī.
 bēda-bidita pāvana kiyē tē saba, mahimā nātha! tumhārī. 9.
 kaham̐ lagi kahauṁ dīna aganita jinhakī tuma bipati nivārī.
 kalimala-grasita dāsa-tulasī para, kāhē kṛpā bisārī?. 10.

Verse no. 166—Lord Sri Ram is an unparalleled benefactor and well-wisher of the humble, the distressed, the meek, the weak and the lowly, for the Lord has an extremely kind, merciful, gracious, obliging and malleable heart and indeed he is a treasury (or a fount) of the grandest of all virtues such as mercy and compassion, and he does good to others selflessly, without any apparent cause to do so, or with any self-interest involved, and without seeking any thing in return, not even as much as a formal thanks! (1).

[Now Tulsidas cites several examples to show how Lord Ram had been extremely gracious towards so many souls who were all distressed and in great suffering, and had benefited them by granting them boons or rewards that they had never imagined in their lives that they would ever get.]

The wife of sage Gautam (i.e. Ahilya), who was humble and devoid of any spiritual merit, prowess or means, had become a stone due to her sins. You had gone from your home (Ayodhya) to liberate her from her terrible curse by touching the stone by your holy feet.¹ (2).

[¹This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, from Chaupai line no. 11 that precedes Doha no. 210—to Doha no. 211.]

The Guha-Nishad (the boatman)—who indulged in violence (killing, hunting), had a sinful and vile body and wandered in the forest like a wild animal (i.e. as a savage)—was embraced by you due to his affections, regard and pure love for you, without even considering his low caste and vile deeds.² (3).

[²This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 100—to Doha no. 102; and Uttar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that precede Doha no. 20.]

Though Jayant, the son of Indra, had committed such a grave crime (of pricking Sita with his beak in the form of a crow) that he was unpardonable, yet when he wandered in all the worlds in distress seeking shelter (from your head-less arrow which was pursuing him), and not finding any, finally landed at your holy feet, distressed, terrified and tormented by fear of death and pleaded before you for mercy, you had removed all his fears (and spared his life).³ (4).

[³This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 1—to Doha no. 2.]

The vulture Jatayu was born as a bird and partook meat and flesh (of dead animals)—which good or righteous deed, ritual or other means had he done or adopted by the good effects of which you had performed his last rites (funeral or cremation) with your own hands like he were your own father, and gave him salvation?⁴ (5).

[⁴This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 29—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 33.]

Sabari was a woman of low caste, ignorant and stupid, who was castigated and expelled by the society as well as excommunicated by the Vedas. [The Vedas did not sanction any means which could lead her to salvation; so she was exiled to spend the rest of her life as a recluse in a forest.] But realising her predicament, and her true faith, devotion and affection, Sri Ram had given her his Darshan (divine viewing) and had liberated her.⁵ (6).

[⁴This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Aranya Kand, from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 34—to Doha no. 36.]

When Sugriv, the monkey, was overwhelmed by fear caused to him by his brother Baali and came calling to seek refuge/shelter (i.e., your help) at your holy feet, you could not bear the extreme sorrows and miseries of your servant (refugee, follower, subordinate) and killed Baali even in the face of ignominy and life-long blame.⁵ (7).

[⁵Baali had not caused any direct harm to Sri Ram, nor any other grave sin which deserved such a severe capital punishment as death. The quarrel with Sugriv was a simple case of siblings fighting one another. As for Baali usurping Sugriv's wife, the latter did the same thing once he became the king after Baali's death. The killing of Baali was an ignominious blemish on Sri Ram for the rest of his life though it is true that Baali was granted emancipation and salvation by the Lord when he died#.

This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Kiskhindha Kand, from Chaupai line no. 6 that precedes Doha no. 4—to #Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 11.]

Vibhishan was the brother of the demon enemy Ravana who was a cruel demon by birth; what devotion or worship worth the name had he done? But as soon as he came (as a refugee) at your holy feet, you came forward to welcome him and embraced him with open, outstretched arms.⁶ (8).

[⁶This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 38—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 50.]

The monkeys and bears are so sinful, vile and evil that it is inauspicious even to pronounce their names; but oh Lord, you had made even those sinners pure and respectful. The Vedas are witness to it, and this is your glory, fame and grace.⁷ (9).

[⁷Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 1-2 that precede Doha no. 18.]

How far can I say? There are numerous such distressed, miserable and humble ones whose miseries, troubles and tribulations have been removed by you⁸, but I don't know why you have forgotten to show the same mercy and graciousness towards this Tulsidas who is bound by the sinful and perverting shackles of Kaliyug? (10).

[⁸Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Baal Kand, Chaupai line nos. 3-4 that precede Doha no. 18.]

[Note—Tulsidas highlights Sri Ram's mercy, grace, benevolence, benefaction, benediction, munificence and magnanimity towards all and sundry, especially his devotees, in this verse.]

(7.17) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 174:

Who is a True Companion

(174)

जाके प्रिय न राम-बैदेही ।
तजिये ताहि/सो छाँड़िये कोटि बैरी सम, जद्यपि परम सनेही ॥1॥
तज्यो पिता प्रहलाद, बिभीषन बंधु, भरत महतारी ।
बलि गुरु तज्यो कंत ब्रज-बनितन्हि, भये मुद-मंगलकारी ॥2॥
नाते नेह रामके मनियत सुहृद सुसेव्य जहाँ लौं ।
अंजन कहा आँखि जेहि फूटै, बहुतक कहौं कहाँ लौं ॥3॥
तलसी सो सब भाँति परम हित पूज्य प्रानते प्यारो
जासों होय सनेह राम-पद, एतो मतो हमारो ॥4॥

(174)

jākē priya na rāma-baidēhī.
tajiye tāhi/sō chāṁḍiyē kōṭi bairī sama, jadyapi parama sanēhī. 1.
tajyō pitā prahalāda, bibhīṣana bandhu, bharata mahatārī.
bali guru tajyō kanta braja-banitanhi, bhayē muda-maṅgalakārī. 2.
nātē nēha rāmakē maniyata suhr̥da susēbya jahām' laum̃.
aṁjana kahā āṁkhi jēhi phūṭai, bahutaka kahaur̃ kahām' laum̃. 3.
talasī sō saba bhām̃ti parama hita pūjya prānatē pyārō
jāsōm̃ hōya sanēha rāma-pada, ētō matō hamārō. 4.

Verse no. 174—Those who do not have love, affection and devotion for Lord Sri Ram and Sita (who is also known as Vaidehi; *rāma-baidēhī*) should be abandoned and forsaken, with one having nothing to do with them as if they were like millions of enemies combined, though they might be most dear and near to one's self¹ (1).

[¹To wit, for one's own spiritual welfare and good it is advisable that one should keep company with those people who have devotion and affection for Lord Ram, and to keep away from those who have no sense of devotion for the Lord.

The former sort of company would help the seeker in his quest for liberation and deliverance from this mundane world with its attendant miseries and torments, and at the same time give him eternal peace and calmness. On the other hand, the latter type of relationship only strengthens the fetters that bind the creature to this gross world, and drags him into the vortex of miseries and problems associated with humdrum existence.

Therefore, a wise person would treat the former company as the one which is very dear to him and like a true friend who is eager to help him in reaching his

destination in right earnest, while keeping away from the latter sort of company as if it consists of his arch enemies who are eager to lead him to his ruin.]

(For example) Prahalad had abandoned his father (demon Hiranyakashipu), Vibhishan his brother (Ravana), Bharat his mother (Kaikeyi), king Bali his Guru (sage Sukracharaya), and the milkmaids (Gopies) of Vrindavan their respective husbands²—because they were proving a hindrance in their spiritual efforts and creating an obstruction in their expression of love, devotion and worship for their respective Lords.

By this act of theirs they acquired good name, immense fame and great glory instead of inviting any ignominy or criticism for their having abandoned their own kith and kin in favour of someone else (in this case the ‘Lord’).

Indeed, all of them became highly pure, revered and venerated in the world; they became auspicious and renowned (2).

[²See note at the end of this verse.]

Each and every person who is honoured, adored and revered in this world, who is considered as being one’s true friend and well-wisher with whom one ought to establish good relationships—verily, all of them owe to Lord Ram the credit for their glory, for the honour bestowed upon them and for their exalted stature as being universally favoured and beneficial for all the creatures, ones who are worthy of establishing relationship with.

Forsooth and without any gainsay, all good relations that has ever existed in this world, and all those who are worthy of being praised, revered and honoured—all of them are recognised as such only due to the common relationship of love, devotion and affection that they have with Lord Sri Ram.

Now, what more can I (Tulsidas) say; what is the use of applying an eye-ointment which results in blindness³? (3).

[³The ‘eye-ointment’ here is a metaphor that refers to those people whom a person considers as his close kith and kin or friend and associate—such as one’s parents, brothers, friends, a Guru or teacher and moral preceptor, and so on. Just like the ointment is in close touch with the eye, these people are also in close contact with the person concerned and have a direct intercourse with him in his day-to-day life. But if these companions have no faith and devotion for Lord God, if they have no spiritual inclination in them, if they are only interested in the person because he serves their self interest and fulfils their needs vis-à-vis the material things of this gross world, then they are best avoided by a wise person.

Say, what is the use of applying an eye ointment that would make a person blind instead of improving his vision? Is it not wiser to stay away from it?]

Oh Tulsidas! He, whose company or teachings results in establishing love, affection and devotion towards the holy feet of Lord Sri Ram—well, he is the one who is our best well-wisher and benefactor, who is to be revered, honoured and venerated, and such a person is more dear to the heart than the life itself? At least, this is my (Tulsidas’) view; it is my well considered opinion after weighing all the pros and cons (4).

[Note—²Prahalad was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, but his demon father did not like it. So Prahalad defied his father and continued to have devotion for the Lord. His father was ultimately killed by Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Lord Narsingh when he tried to kill Prahalad by a sword.

Vibhishan was the younger brother of the demon king Ravana of Lanka. He abandoned his brother when the latter developed animosity with Lord Ram.

Bharat was the younger step-brother of Lord Ram. His mother Kaikeyi, on the instigation of one of her trusted maids called Manthara, the Hunch-Back, had wanted to make her son Bharat as the King of Ayodhya instead of the rightful heir, Lord Ram. Manthara and Kaikeyi conspired, and the latter prevailed upon her husband, King Dasrath who was Lord Ram's father, to send the Lord to fourteen years of forest exile and anoint her son Bharat on the throne instead. Lord Ram obediently went to the forest, but when Bharat came back to Ayodhya from his maternal uncle's place and came to know about the developments, especially the fact that the entire conspiracy was his mother's wickedness and it was to make him the king, he sternly rebuked her and scolded her in harshest terms, making it clear that he would never at all accept the crown at any cost as it belonged to his dearest brother Lord Ram.

Thereafter, as long as he lived, Bharat did not see Kaikeyi's face even once—i.e. since she had opposed Lord Ram, Bharat decided to abandon her for life in spite of the fact that she was his mother and did everything for him so that he could become a king and enjoy the comforts and glory of the kingdom. This story is narrated in Ram Charit Manas, Ayodhya Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 22—to Doha no. 79; (ii) from Doha no. 157—to Doha no. 183.

In Tulsidas' Book 'Geetawali' it is clearly said that "Bharat never talked with his mother Kaikeyi for the rest of his life". Refer: Geetawali, Uttar Kand, verse no. 37.

King Bali was renowned for his charity. When Vishnu, disguised as a dwarf Brahmin, asked him for land measurable by his 3 steps, Bali readily agreed. But his Guru, Sukracharya, who saw through Vishnu's cunning trick, cautioned Bali of what was in fact the treacherous intention of Vishnu, and asked him to retract from his vows. Bali refused on grounds of righteousness and probity. With the welfare of his disciple in his heart, Sukracharya assumed a miniature form and clogged the spout of the Kamandalu (kettle like pot) of water needed to perform the ritual associated with a formal vow. Vishnu got annoyed and poked a straw up the nozzle of the spout to unclog it. It is said that Sukracharya's one eye got blinded by it. Ever since, a one-eyed, crooked and cunning person is given the epithet of 'Sukracharya' because the latter was the Guru of demons. Bali lost his terrestrial kingdom, was made the king of subterranean realm and Vishnu was so pleased with his determination to uphold the virtues of righteousness and probity by not breaking his vows in spite of being warned, that he became his gatekeeper there.

The milkmaids of Vrindavan loved Lord Krishna so dearly that they would not pay heed to their husbands when they tried to dissuade them from showing overt affection for the Lord as it would seem immodest.]

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(7.18) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 175:

Life is futile without devotion for Lord Śrī Rāma

(175)

जो पै रहनि/लगन रामसों नाही ।
 तौ नर खर कूकर सूकर सम बृथा जियत जग माहीं ॥1॥
 काम, क्रोध, मद, लोभ, नींद, भय, भूख, प्यास सबहीके ।
 मनुज देह सुर-साधु सराहत, सो सनेह सिय-पीके ॥2॥
 सूर, सुजान, सुपूत सुलच्छन गनियत गुन गरुआई ।
 बिनु हरिभजन ईदारुनके फल तजत नहीं करुआई ॥3॥
 कीरति, कुल, करतूति, भूति भलि, सील सरूप सलोने ।
 तुलसी प्रभु-अनुराग-रहित जस सालन साग अलोने ॥4॥

(175)

jō pai rahani/lagana rāmasōm nāhīm.
 tau nara khara kūkara sūkara sama bṛthā jiyata jaga māhīm. 1.
 kāma, krōdha, mada, lōbha, nīnda, bhaya, bhūkha, pyāsa sabahīkē.
 manuja dēha sura-sādhū sarāhata, sō sanēha siya-pīkē. 2.
 sūra, sujāna, supūta sulacchana ganiyata guna garu'ā'ī.
 binu haribhajana imḍārunakē phala tajata nahīm karu'ā'ī. 3.
 kīrati, kula, karatūti, bhūti bhali, sīla sarūpa salōnē.
 tulasī prabhu-anurāga-rahita jasa sālana sāga alōnē. 4.

Verse no. 175—[This verse continues the idea expounded in the previous verse no. 174 regarding relationships that one should develop, and those that one should better avoid. Here, emphasise is given on the importance of having devotion, faith and affection for Lord Ram as an overding criterion for being worthy of honour in this world and being eligible for becoming friends of others.]

Those who do not have love, affection, faith and devotion for Lord Sri Ram live a futile, worthless and dishonourable life like that of a dog, an ass and a swine. [To wit, their lives are like animals that spend their lifetimes in feeding their stomach and trying to fulfil the needs of their sense organs without doing anything else to their credit.] (1).

Every single creature who has a gross body is bound to have some of the negative traits that are common to all living beings; they are present in animals as well as in humans no matter how high a person may be. Some of these negativities are the following—lust, desire and passions (*kāma*), anger, vengeance and wrathfulness (*krōdha*), arrogance, haughtiness, ego, vanity and pride (*mada*), greed, rapacity and cravings (*lōbha*), a tendency to be alert at finding fault with others while sleeping over their own burden of shortcomings; or to have a natural desire to sleep (*nīnda*), having groundless fears and imaginary apprehensions (that lead them to be suspicious of everyone around, fear of death and birth, and so on) (*bhaya*), as well as hunger and thirst (which are natural demands of the gross body that dominate their existence, and all their attention and efforts are diverted to overcome these two natural characteristics of the body) (*bhūkha*, *pyāsa*).

That is to say, even a human body possesses these negative traits in a natural way just like the of animals who too have them. But inspite of this (i.e. despite such similarity between a human body and that of an animal), the reason for which the human body is so much praised over that of an animal and sought after by the exalted gods, saints and sages is, however, different—it is the glorious virtue of devotion, faith, affection and love for Lord Ram that is made possible via the medium of the human body that makes it so praise worthy and an object of honour and respect by all the creatures in this world.

[To wit, the only worth of having a human body is to have love, faith and devotion for the Lord. Otherwise, the human form is not any better than the body of a dog, an ass or a swine.] (2).

A son, who is most valiant, very clever and obedient to his parents, and possesses good characters and excellent virtues, may be regarded as the best and the most honourable in the society, but if he does not have devotion and affection for the Lord and does not chant his holy name, then he is like the fruit of ‘*imḍārūna*’ creeper (a ‘wild-gourd’, cucurbita or colocynth/*Citrullus colocynthis*, usually used for decorative purpose and as a herb for medicinal use) which does not abandon its bitter taste inspite of its beautiful and attractive appearance. [To wit, there is no use of having a son who is demonic by nature and opposed to the Lord God inspite of his having other excellent characters and virtues.] (3).

Having great fame and an excellent reputation with a good name in this world (*kīratī*), being born in a high class family with a good pedigree (*kula*), doing good deeds and acting righteously (*karatūti*), possessing immense good characters and powers and authority as well as being courteous, polite and modest (*bhūti bhali sīla*), or having a handsome, strong and beautiful body (*sarūpa salōnē*)—verily, Tulsidas says that if a person lacks love, affection, devotion and faith in Lord Ram then all these possessions and qualities are worthless, useless and bland like cooked vegetables are without the addition of salt.

[To wit, if salt is not added to a cooked vegetable dish, it would have no appeal and taste bland no matter how excellent was the raw material that was used to prepare this dish, or how excellently it was cooked, or how expert the cook was. Likewise, if a person does not have the grand quality of love, devotion and faith in

Lord Ram, then no matter what other qualities he possesses, he would deserve no honour and praise.] (4).

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(7.19) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 179:

Lord Rāma is the only Helper and Well-wisher

Rāga Bilāvala

(179)

कहाँ जाऊँ, कासों कहौं, कौन सुनै दीनकी ।
 त्रिभुवन तुही गति सब अंगहीनकी ॥1॥
 जग जगदीस घर घरनि घनेरे हैं ।
 निराधारके अधार गुनगन तेरे हैं ॥2॥
 गजराज—काज खगराज तजि धायो को ।
 मोसे दोस—कोस पोसे, तोसे माय जायो को ॥3॥
 मोसे कूर कायर कुपूत कौड़ी आधके ।
 किये बहुमोल तैं करैया गीध—श्राधके ॥4॥
 तुलसीकी तेरे ही बनाये, बलि, बनैगी ।
 प्रभुकी बिलंब—अंब दोष—दुख जनैगी ॥5॥

(179)

kahām jā'um, kāsōm kahaum, kauna sunai dīnakī.
 tribhuvana tuhī gati saba aṅgahīnakī. 1.
 jaga jagadīsa ghara gharani ghanērē haiṁ.
 nirādhārakē adhāra gunagana tērē haiṁ. 2.
 gajarāja-kāja khagarāja taji dhāyō kō.
 mōsē dōsa-kōsa pōsē, tōsē māya jāyō kō. 3.
 mōsē kūra kāyara kupūta kauṛī ādhakē.
 kiyē bahumōla taim karaiyā gīdha-śrādhakē. 4.
 tulasīkī tērē hī banāyē, bali, banaigī.
 prabhukī bilamba-amba dōṣa-dukha janaigī. 5.

Verse no. 179—[Tulsidas pleads with Lord Ram—] Where can I go? Before whom should I plead? Who would listen to this impoverished pauper (who lacks all means

and resources)? For a person who is resourceless and helpless like me, the only destination and succour is you (i.e. Lord Sri Ram) (1).

The world has a lot many ‘jagadīsa’ in virtually every household. [That is to say, there are countless gods and custodians in this world. The word ‘jagadīsa’ means a lord or god.]

But for someone who is completely devoid of resources and is utterly hapless, singing the glories and fame of Lord Sri Ram is the only recourse and means of getting support.¹ (2).

[¹To wit, a person who is without any worldly resources by which he can do any meritorious deed that would help him accumulate some good reward, if he has no spiritual merit worth the name either, if he lacks the wherewithal for getting liberation and deliverance from this gross world of miseries and pains, then for such a person the only avenue open is Lord Ram’s holy name and the path of having devotion and love for the Lord. There is no other way. The gods expect that a person does good deeds in his life and makes offerings to them if he wants these gods to be benevolent upon him. For a person who lacks all worldly resources, it is impossible to do deeds such as making charities or doing sacrifices that would please the gods. He may not be intelligent enough to read the scriptures and follow their instructions in full; he may have so many worldly obligations to fulfil that it is well nigh impossible for him to do meditation or renounce the world or remain detached from its affairs.

In this scenario, the only hope lies in surrendering to Lord Ram and inculcating devotion for the Lord. It comes without any strings attached, is easy to practice, and its rewards are stupendous.]

To save the Elephant (from the jaws of the crocodile), who else would have jumped off his mount Garuda (the celestial Eagle) and rush forward (because Garuda was too slow for the urgency of the occasion)²?

You have sustained and taken care of even me (Tulsidas) who is a treasury of sins, vices and evil deeds—is there any one other such benefactor and well-wisher, except you, that has ever been given birth by any mother in this world?³ (3).

[²The Elephant was called ‘Gaja’. Once while he was bathing in a river, a crocodile caught hold of his legs and started dragging him inside the water. Gaja tried all his might to save himself, but failed. When he was just about to drown, he held a lotus in his trunk and offered it to Lord Vishnu, pleading the Lord to save him from certain death. When Lord Vishnu heard his cry, he mounted his vehicle, the Garuda, and dashed forward to save the Elephant. But time was running out and the Garuda was too slow. So the Lord jumped off Garuda’s back and revealed himself instantly at the place where the Elephant was. Then the Lord threw his discus and cut-off the head of the crocodile, thus saving the Gaja’s life.

³Here Tulsidas means that there is no one as benevolent, gracious, kind and forgiving as Lord Ram who provides liberation and deliverance to even the most sinful of creatures. And the wonder of it is that the Lord does it selflessly and without delay as exemplified by the example of the Elephant.]

Oh Lord (Sri Ram) who had performed the last rites (cremation) of the vulture Jatau⁴! You have made a valuable person out of me who is actually so cruel (kūra), coward (kāyara), an unworthy son (kupūta), and a person who is worthless like a half-pence (kaurī ādhakē)! (4).

[⁴Lord Ram did not demur from performing the last rites of a vulture named Jatau though he was a cadaver-eating bird because Jatau had devotion for the Lord.]

Verily oh Lord, I submit truthfully, in all humility and with full conviction that the misdeeds, the misdemeanours and the maleficence of Tulsidas, and their resultant evil effects that cloud his future and eclipse his chances of getting peace and happiness, can be undone (or rectified) only by you.

If you delay in liberating me and providing succour to me, then this body-like mother of mine would give birth to sorrows, miseries, torments and tribulations of all sorts.⁵ (5).

[⁵To wit, oh Lord if you do not show your mercy soon and extricate Tulsidas from the quagmire of the world and the eddy of the whirlpool-like mundane existence, then he would be surrounded by hordes of sins, vices, evils and other types of corruptions, immoralities and turpitudes from which he would find himself impossible to be freed. Oh Lord, it would be uncharacteristic of you and would give you a very bad name should Tulsidas suffer from any of the torments associated with this mundane existence inspite of his praying to you and surrendering himself to you. So oh Lord, be quick in helping him out of his miseries.]

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(7.20) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 189:

The Palanquin/The Pilgrim's Journey

Rāga Gaurī

(189)

राम कहत चलु, राम कहत चलु, राम कहत चलु भाई रे।
 नाहिं तौ भव-बेगारि महुँ परिहै, छूटत अति कठिनाई रे॥1॥
 बाँस पुरान साज सब अटकठ, सरल तिकोन खटोला रे।
 हमहिं दिहल करि कुटिल करमचँद मंद मोल बिनु डोला रे॥2॥
 बिषम कहार मार-मद-माते चलहिं न पाउँ बटोरा रे।
 मंद बिलंद अभेरा दलकन पाइय दुख झकझोरा रे॥3॥
 काँट कुराय लपेटन लोटन ठावहिं ठाउँ बझाऊ रे।
 जस जस चलिय दूरि तस तस निज बास न भेंट लगाऊ रे॥4॥

मारग अगम, संग नहि संबल, नाउँ गाउँकर भूला रे।
तुलसिदास भव—त्रास हरहु अब, होहु राम अनुकूला रे।।5।।

(189)

rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu, rāma kahata calu bhā'ī rē.
nāhiṁ tau bhava-bēgāri maham̐ parihai, chūṭata ati kaṭhinā'ī rē. 1.
bām̐sa purāna sāja saba aṭhakāṭha, sarala tikōna khaṭōlā rē.
hamahiṁ dihala kari kuṭila karamacam̐da manda mōla binu ḍōlā rē. 2.
biṣama kahāra māra-mada-mātē calahiṁ na pā'um̐ baṭōrā rē.
manda bilanda abhērā dalakana pā'iya dukha jhakajhōrā rē. 3.
kāṁṭa kurāya lapēṭana lōṭana ṭhāvahiṁ ṭhā'um̐ bajhā'ū rē.
jasa jasa caliya dūri tasa tasa nija bāsa na bhēṇṭa lagā'ū rē. 4.
māraga agama, saṅga nahiṁ sambala, nā'um̐ gā'um̐kara bhūlā rē.
tulasidāsa bhava-trāsa harahu aba, hōhu rāma anukūlā rē. 5.

Verse no. 189—[In this wonderful verse, Tulsidas uses the metaphor of the Palanquin and its Bearers to describe the journey of the soul through various lives in this mundane world.

The Palanquin is an ancient mode of carrying passengers, especially members of the nobility, by bearers who carry this frame on their shoulders. It is a covered wooden vehicle, a carriage or a litter, with a framework that consists of a small bed or a few seats to seat the passenger, and this private space is enclosed by curtains on the sides. It is meant to carry one or two passengers, held aloft by two horizontal bamboo poles that are borne by bearers on their shoulders, usually in groups of four or six persons on each side, one group in the front and the other in the rear to lift and carry the carriage forward.

The bearer, like a beast of burden, has to carry this load for as long as he lives as it is his only livelihood to which he is seemingly bound by virtue of his destiny. It is a very tiresome and difficult job to do as long distances are to be covered while carrying this burden on one's shoulders and walking on foot, often on rough terrains and harsh weather conditions, the task being made all the more difficult with the fear of punishment if the passenger, who is usually a member of the nobility and a rich person who are more often than not haughty, inconsiderate and of a whimsical nature, becomes angry at the bearers if they do not walk properly and the carriage swings uncomfortably for the rider.

But the poor bearer finds himself in a quandary: What will he do and how will he feed his own stomach if he does not carry the Palanquin, for this is the only thing he is destined to do and the only vocation he knows of due to his ill-fate? Well of course, if he is determined to break free from this serfdom or bondage to which he is seemingly bound for life, he can very well do it by learning some other skills to free and sustain himself. And if he indeed breaks free from the compulsion of carrying this heavy burden, he finds a lot of comfort, happiness and ease in his life.

This is what is hinted in this verse—if the soul is determined to break free from the cycle of birth and death and its incumbent miseries and horrors, it can easily do it, and the safest and the surest method which does not require special skills is to have love, devotion and faith in Lord Ram. This idea is the central theme of this verse.

The bearers of this vehicle often sing some folk songs to break the monotony of the long journey as they tread along on their tedious path. Tulsidas advises the creature that his life is also like this journey, and he has to cover it on foot himself, i.e. he has to endure all the accompanying miseries and troubles of his life himself. If he wants to redeem himself and ensure that in the future he must not carry this burden again, then why does he not chant Lord Ram's holy name, which is the great redeemer and provider of freedom from the cycle of birth and death, even as he goes about his daily grind in life in the usual way? If he does so, liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation would come to him unasked for and very easily.

In this metaphor, the soul is the 'passenger', the body is the 'Palanquin', the creature is the 'bearer'.]

'Oh brother! (I advise you that you must) Go on chanting Lord Sri Ram's holy name repeatedly (while you do your daily chores), because otherwise you'll be caught (trapped) in the slavery (bondage, fetters of surfrage) of this mundane world (i.e. in the myriad numbers of duties, responsibilities, allurements, sorrows, worries etc.) which would be too difficult for you to shed (i.e. it would be too difficult for you to get freedom from the shackles of this gross mundane world).¹ (1).

[¹It may be possible to break free from the slavery or serfage of a landlord or a king, but the vicious circle or cycle of birth and death in this mundane world is so strong that it will continue to trap you till the time true wisdom and true knowledge of the essence of the soul dawns upon you. To wit, till the time you do not become self-realised and enlightened enough to voluntarily renounce this world and its tempting attachments, you will continue to remain trapped in this vicious cycle of birth and death, and suffer endlessly from its incumbent miseries and horrors.

But oh brother, if you use the shield of Lord Sri Ram's holy and divine name then the enemies in the form of 'Maya' (a personified form of delusions and their associated prolema in this mundane world) would not be able to enlist you as a slave. That is to say, Maya and its spin-off problems would not disturb you in the least. The delusory effects of this gross material world that seems to give you pleasures and comforts from enjoying its sensual objects that land you in a never-ending chain of problems that rob you of all peace and happiness would leave you alone.

This is because Maya is unable to wield her influence or spell on the servants or devotees of Lord Sri Ram, she being herself a maid of the Lord. This exemption is assured by Lord Sri Ram's name, and it is guaranteed by the Lord himself—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, Doha no. 71.

Refer also to Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 45, (ii) Doha no. 46 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-8 that precede it; (iii) Chaupai line nos. 4-6 that precedes Doha no. 59; (iv) from Chaupai line nos. 7 that precedes Doha no. 70—to Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 72; (v) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 90; and (vi) from Chaupai line no. 3 that precedes Doha no. 116—to Doha no. 120.

All the above cited verses endorse the principle laid out in this present verse no. 189 of Vinai Patrika.]

The cunning and wicked 'karamacam̐da'² has given us a very bad and dirty 'khaṭōla'³ free of cost⁴ to ride in it during our journey through life.

Unfortunately this ugly and troublesome khaṭōlā has two old and worn-out rotten bamboo poles ('bām̐sa purāna') attached to it, to lift and carry it forward⁵. All

its accoutrements, decorations and furnishings are haphazard, odd and untasteful (*sāja saba aṭhakāṭha*)⁶, and the three seats provided in it are bare of even basic comfort (*sarala tikōna*)⁷. (2).

[²*Karamacamḍa* is a personified form of our evil past deeds and their incumbent negative effects; this term is used as a derogatory epithet for someone whom we loathe but can't avoid dealing with.

The 'soul' or the 'Atma' of a creature is his 'true self', his 'true identity'. The creature dies and the Atma assumes a new body in its next birth, and the body that it is assigned is dependent upon the net effect of the aggregate of all the deeds it has done in its previous life. So it is possible that in its previous life a creature was born in a high family, but in the next birth he can be condemned to some lower form of life, say as a dog or a pig. It is because the deeds that this person had done while alive were so sinful and despicable that he had to be punished for them in the form of a lower life in his next birth. This works on the simple theory of action and result, or the doctrine of Karma which states essentially that a person reaps what he sows.

³The word 'us' refers to the creature, the living being in general. And the true identity of this creature is his Atma or his soul which is 'pure consciousness' and a subtle entity, and not the gross body that is physically present in the world and interacts with it. The 'body' is merely a vehicle or the 'palanquin' or the '*khaṭōlā*' that carries the soul in its journey through life in this world. This so called '*khaṭōlā*' is a storehouse of numerous problems that cause constant irritation for the soul and keeps the latter agitated. The soul's journey through life is a repertory of countless miseries, unending grief, pains and tribulations of myriad kinds.

The construction of this *khaṭōlā* that represents the creature's body is most despicable and ugly as it consists of nothing else but mucous, bones, veins, blood, stool, urine etc. Besides its physical construction, the body is full of negative qualities and characters, is prone to committing sins and evil deeds, and is more attracted to vices and tempted by evil forces than to good things and righteousness. This '*khaṭōlā*' is dirty inasmuch as it lacks spiritual hygiene in the way of devotion, faith and love for the Lord God.

⁴The *khaṭōlā* or the gross body has been given to us, the 'creature', free-of-cost so that we grab it greedily as is our natural habit of accepting whatever is offered free of cost to us, in spite of knowing that this particular vehicle, the body, is full of inherent problems and causes so much misery to the rider, the soul. Ironically, the creature loves this ugly *khaṭōlā* because it helps the creature to enjoy the comforts and pleasures offered by the sense objects of the world and thereby gratify his natural urges irrespective of the fact that this causes more heartburn for him in the long run.

⁵The old and worn out 'bamboo poles' refer to the two negative qualities inherent in the creature, viz. 'Avidya' and 'Moha' which means 'ignorance of the reality' and 'delusions that create attachments and longings for the world' respectively. All sorts of ignorance, illusions, hallucinations, bewilderments etc. come under this category. These two negative qualities of Avidya and Moha control everything the creature does or thinks vis-à-vis the gross material world.

If the bamboo poles do not lift the '*khaṭōlā*', it will rest quietly on the ground. Similarly, if these two negative virtues do not disturb the creature, the latter would live in peace and be happy even while living in this world.

⁶The '*sāja saba*', i.e. the various ugly accoutrements, decorations and furnishings in this vehicle symbolised by the body refer to the countless shortcomings, flaws, faults and defects that it possesses. These are many, some of

them are Kaam (passions), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed; rapacity), Mada (arrogance), Moha (attachments), Aviveka or Agyan (ignorance), Matsarya (jealousy, ill-will), Virodha (opposition and animosity), Bhaya (fear), and so on and so forth. All these factors add to the discomfiture caused to the soul that is already suffering from the decrepit condition of the ugly and uncomfortable 'khaṭōlā'.

They all refer to the various evil tendencies of the mind which result in the body doing evil deeds and the creature is compulsively pushed forward on an evil path.

⁷The 'sarala tikōna' refers to the three bare seats provided in this 'khaṭōlā'. Usually the seat is cushioned and made reasonably comfortable for the rider, but here it is simply exposed rough wooden plank. These 'three seats' refer to the three rewards a person gets for all his deeds done in this life, viz. 'Artha' or financial gains, 'Kaam' or fulfilment of desires, and 'Sakaam Dharma' or attaining worldly glory. They are likened to a 'seat' because the person is recognised and known by them; he rides on the glory and name acquired by these three rewards of his deeds.

It ought to be noted here that the fourth reward which would actually give the rider, the 'soul', peace and happiness is 'Moksha' or emancipation and salvation, which this 'khaṭōlā' lacks.

The 'tikōna' may also refer to the three windows or doors of this 'khaṭōlā' through which the rider, in this case the 'soul', looks out to the world and sets its destination or direction where it wants to go. They appear deceptively 'sarala' or simple because they are easy to achieve but do not give any worthwhile result for the long term good of the soul. The body remains engrossed in pursuing wealth, fulfilment of worldly desires, or acquiring fame and name by successful accomplishments in different fields. But they are 'deceptive' inasmuch as they have no sustainable benefit for the welfare of the soul either in this life or in the next.]

The Bearers of this Palanquin (called 'kahāra') are ill-trained and odd in number and extremely difficult to keep in order (biṣama). The problem is further compounded by their being rogue and drunk with haughtiness and arrogance (māra-mada-mātē) so much so that they can't walk properly and in step with each other (calahiṁ na pā'um' baṭōrā rē).⁸

The result is that the palanquin moves ahead in an erratic and jerky manner, sometimes too swiftly, sometimes too slowly, sometimes it swings upwards, sometimes plunges awkwardly downwards, and often times it sways to the left and the right (manda bilanda abhērā dalakana), causing the palanquin to toss and rock violently which causes extreme discomfort to the rider (the soul; pā'iya dukha jhakajhōrā rē) (3).

[⁸Usually there are three pairs of bearers in the front and rear to lift the palanquin evenly so that it moves ahead smoothly. They are well trained and orderly in their movement. But the 'bearers' of this symbolic 'khaṭōlā' are only five in number, some are in pairs and some single, viz. the five sense organs of the body, such as the ears and the eyes which are in pairs, as well as the nose, the tongue and the skin which are single. The 'khaṭōlā' symbolised by the body is therefore asymmetrically made, and its movement is likewise odd and uncomfortable. The 'movement' here refers to the tendency of these above five organs of perception to reach out for their respective objects in the external world.

That is, the 'eye' wants to see things in the world; the 'ear' similarly wants to hear sounds arising in the outside world; the nose wishes to smell the fragrances of

the world; the tongue wants to taste its things; and the skin wishes to feel the sensations of this world. In order to fulfil their desires, they have to 'reach out' or go out into the world. Once they do so, they feel tempted to move in the direction that appeals to them, dragging the unwilling but helpless soul behind them into the web of miseries and pain that result from the waywardness of these five organs.

Since these five organs would not listen to any sane advice given to them like a drunkard who refuses to hear to any reasoning, the symbolic bearers of this palanquin move ahead with an unsteady and disbalanced gait, rocking the 'khaṭōlā' to and fro.

Now, since the 'khaṭōlā' itself is old and decrepit, it cannot complain against the bearers who don't and can't walk in a balanced, uniform and steady gait. Therefore, the body sometimes does good deeds and sometimes evil deeds in an unpredicable manner, in an almost impulsive way. The five sense organs of speech, touch, smell, hearing and sight do not work in sync or harmony with each other. The resultant tugs and pulls are making life hell for the soul who rides this palanquin symbolised by the body of the creature.]

The path is also not smooth as it is strewn here and there (ṭhāvahim ṭhā'um⁹) with sharp thorns, stones and rocks, as well as with creepers and undergrowth (kāṃṭa kurāya lapētana lōṭana) that tangle the feet of the bearers and hinder their progress (bajhā'ū rē)⁹, adding to the troubles and miseries of the rider.

The more he moves ahead on this intractable forest path with its amazing array of illusions and distractions that cause a lot of heartburn to the rider, the further away he gets from his own homestead (where he would have got a lot of peace and happiness) (jasa jasa caliya dūri tasa tasa). He seems lost in this forest, with no one to show him the path (nija bāsa na bhēṇṭa lagā'ū rē).¹⁰ (4).

[⁹In other words, in addition to the problems inherent to the body, there are untold numbers of existential problems in this world over which the creature has no control, but they can't be avoided or wished away if the creature has to survive in this world. So he has to cope with them and their whimsical nature. Some of these problems are related to other creatures, some to the evil stars, and still others to the fact that the individual is unable to adjust himself to his surroundings because of his stubbornness.

Here, the 'thorns' symbolise the miseries created by the sensual attractions of the material sense objects of the world; the different oppositions and adversities faced by the creature in attainment of his goal are like the many 'stones and rocks' that hinder his progress; the countless forms of lust, passions, attachments, infatuations and attractions that bind the creature to so many relationships that he develops in this world are like the 'creepers and the undergrowth' that tie the feet of the palanquin bearers.

To wit, the creature's path to salvation and emancipation is littered with thorns, sharp edged stones as well as poisonous creepers in the shape of various attachments, allurments, temptations and enticements of this world that cling to him like dirt covering the body during a long journey, and they cause immense hurdles, agonies and discomfiture to the traveller.

These hurdles force the palanquin to stop here and there. That is, the body is unable to reach its destination of devotion, worship, doing good and noble deeds etc. because of the hindrances caused by the tugs and pulls of this mundane world.

¹⁰Here, the person's own home refers to the realisation that his true 'self', which is pure consciousness and an image of the cosmic Consciousness as well as a

source of peace and happiness, resides in his own heart, and that it is futile to search for peace and happiness in the outside world because these virtues can be found within one's own self. The truthful destination for the soul is finding emancipation and salvation for its self and breaking free from the vicious cycle of transmigration, and not in running after the objects of this world which would never give any sustainable happiness.

The more a creature gets entangled in the world, the more he loses his peace; the more he allows himself to do this the stronger and more stubborn his fetters become, and further away from the Truth and eternal source of happiness he is drawn.

As the mind and body go on sinking deeper into the quagmire of illusionary pleasures and hallucinations of this delusory world, the actual and truthful 'real-self' gets further away from the truth which recedes into the background.]

Verily indeed, this path (through life in this mundane world) is very horrible and full of hurdles as described herein above (*māraga agama*), and there is no able companion to help out (*saṅga nahim sambala*)¹¹, and the creature is so confused and overwhelmed with fear that he has lost the way to his destination (*nā'um gā'umkara bhūlā rē*)¹².

Tulsidas requests his merciful Lord Ram that in this precarious situation in which the soul has found itself, the Lord should now step in and show his grace and favour to it (*hōhu rāma anukūlā rē*) by giving it relief from its torments and free it from the horrors of this transmigratory world (*bhava-trāsa harahu aba*)¹³. (5).

[¹¹There is no one to show the right path, too. Everyone in this world is driven by self-interest, and no one bothers about the suffering of the other person and his welfare. So if the miserable creature fails to have company of saints and pious people who would show him the correct path that would be for his real good, then the creature is as good as being lost in a wild forest with no companion and hope of ever seeing his home where he would get peace and comfort again.

¹²In the confusion and chaos that surrounds the unlucky soul, it has forgotten about its true identity, which is not the body but pure and truthful 'consciousness', and also about its true destination, which is to find liberation and deliverance from the cycle of birth and death, and attain emancipation and salvation for its self, instead of getting involved in the affairs of this mundane world.

One forgets the name of the destination village out of bewilderments and agitations which have been caused by weariness and fatigue of the journey. The soul in other words has forgotten the ultimate goal of life, which is attainment of the supreme holy feet of Lord Sri Ram, of being 'one' with the Lord and disrupting the vicious cycle or circle of birth and death for all times to come.

¹³Tulsidas asks Lord Ram to please show mercy and compassion on this soul and remove its fears arising out of this ocean-like world of birth and death.]

[Note :- By using the analogy of the 'rider' and the 'palanquin', Tulsidas describes the consternations and the precarious conditions of the soul during its journey through various lives in this gross mundane world. It was foolish enough for it not to walk the distance, the path, on its own, i.e., use its own discrimination and wisdom to reach the destination which is the Lord himself in this case. But, due to its indolent, lazy and lethargic habits, it thought to sit comfortably on a carrier called the human body, and being thus becoming dependent on it, it had to not only lose the ultimate goal or destination but suffer intemperately, interminably due to the wayward, reckless inclinations of its vehicle, which is the body in this case. Another error of the soul, or

the ‘true-self’, was not taking control of the steering wheel and let the vehicle we driven by the driver in the form of Kaliyug. What can it hope from such a driver—he would not only dash the vehicle somewhere, but also never let the soul ever reach its destination. A great and serious message is being conveyed through this analogy by Tulsidas. I think another suitable title for this verse could be ‘*The Pilgrim's Journey*’.]

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(7.21) Goswami Tulsidas’ Book of Prayers, ‘Vinai Patrika’, verse no. 198:

The Golden Opportunity which shouldn’t be missed

Rāga Bhairavī

(198)

मन पछितैहै अवसर बीते ।
 दुरलभ देह पाइ हरिपद भजु, करम, बचन अरु ही ते ॥1॥
 सहसबाहु, दसबदन आदि नृप बचे न काल बलीते ।
 हम—हम करि धन—धाम सँवारे, अंत चले उठि रीते ॥2॥
 सुत—बनितादि जानि स्वास्थरत, न करु नेह सबही ते ।
 अंतहुँ तोहिं तजैंगे पामर! तू न तजै अबही ते ॥3॥
 अब नाथहिं अनुरागु, जागु जड़, त्यागु दुरासा जी ते ।
 बुझै काम अग्नि तुलसी कहूँ, बिषय—भोग बहु घी ते ॥4॥

(198)

mana pachitaihai avasara bītē.
 duralabha dēha pā'i haripada bhaju, karama, bacana aru hī tē. 1.
 sahasabāhu, dasabadana ādi nrpa bacē na kāla balītē.
 hama-hama kari dhana-dhāma samvārē, anta calē uṭhi rītē. 2.
 suta-banitādi jāni svāratharata, na karu nēha sabahī tē.
 antahum' tōhim tajaiṅgē pāmara! tū na tajai abahī tē. 3.
 aba nāthahim anurāgu, jāgu jaṛa, tyāgu durāsā jī tē.
 bujhai kāma agini tulasī kahum', biṣaya-bhōga bahu ghī tē. 4.

Verse no. 198—Oh my Mana (mind and heart)! You will have to regret and lament a lot if and when this opportunity passes away (i.e. when you miss the chance of obtaining salvation and emancipation even after acquiring the human body). (mana pachitaihai avasara bītē.)¹

Hence, having received this rare human body (*duralabha dēha pā'i*), you should worship, revere and have true and full devotion for the lotus-like holy feet of the Lord (Sri Ram) (*haripada bhaju*) with your heart in it, with all sincerity and honesty in whatever you do and whatever you speak (*karama, bacana aru hī tē*).² (1).

[¹To wit, you have got this human birth after countless births in different forms in the hierarchy of creation. All the good that you had done in all these lives got accumulated and you were rewarded with a human body in your current birth. It is a rare opportunity for you to get freedom from this cycle of birth and death, because you can do many positive and meritorious things with this human body that are not possible in any other form that a living being acquires in this creation. So, be wise and do not fritter away this chance under delusions of any kind, for if you do miss this golden opportunity then be sure you will have to regret and lament for generations for your stupidity and ignorance.

²This fact is endorsed in Tulsidas' epic book 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Uttar Kand, from Chaupai line no. 7 that precedes Doha no. 43—to Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 45.]

Even the most valiant, strong and invincible kings such as Shahastrabahu and Ravana etc. could not escape the jaws of Kaal (death), for they too had to die.

All those who had been miserly hoarding and taking great care of material their wealth and prosperous household which they had accumulated with great diligence and effort over a long period of time in their lives, all the while crying 'all this is mine; I possess it; it is me who has created this wealth; it's mine and no one else's; I would not part with it' (*hama-hama kari dhana-dhāma samvārē*)—well, all such persons had to forgo every bit of it and leave everything behind as they have to go from here empty-handed at the time of death (and not a single farthing could be taken along with them from this world to the next world) (*anta calē uṭhi rītē*) (2).

Regard the son, the wife and all others as being selfish and driven by their self-interests (*suta-banītādi jāni svāratharata*). Beware: Don't be attached to them unnecessarily (*na karu nēha sabahī tē*).

Oh you foolish and mean wretch (*pāmara*)! All of them would certainly leave or abandon you in the end (*antahum' tōhim' tajaiṅgē*), say then why don't you leave them right now (*tū na tajai abahī tē*).³ (3).

[³Why don't you shun attachments and infatuations with them when you know that one day all of them would leave you, or you would be forced to leave them? Why don't you instead have devotion, love and affection for the Lord who shall accompany you in your journey even beyond death, and will not betray you ever? Remember, the Lord is your true friend and companion in the journey of your soul through different births, while all other relationships that you think are yours are merely transitional interactions just like one meets so many strangers during a train journey only to forget about them once the destination station is reached.

Why don't you understand that when the time of death comes, you alone would leave this world, and all others whom you had been thinking as your very own would stay behind. This is the best of all scenerios; in most of the cases your so-called kith and kin would turn away from you if they find that you can't fulfil their needs and live up to their expectations from you.]

Oh you stupid and dumb-witted fool (*jāra*)! Wake up (*'jāgu'*—from the sleep of ignorance and delusions that has overwhelmed you and clouded your reasoning). Learn to be realistic by developing love and affection with someone who is your true friend and well-wisher, i.e. with Lord Ram (*aba nāthahim anurāgu*), and abandon all hopes from your heart of ever deriving pleasure and happiness from this mundane, illusionary, materialistic and selfish temporal world and its relationships (*tyāgu durāsā jī tē*).

Oh Tulsidas (wake up and try to understand that) even as a raging fire can never be doused (or calmed) by pouring more Ghee (oil) into it (*bujhai kāma agini tulasī kahum; bahu ghī tē*) (i.e. it gets more intense and furious by the oil), these hopes and desires, which are also like a fire (*kāma agini*), go on escalating as more and more objects and comforts and pleasures of this world are acquired (*biṣaya-bhōga*) (i.e. wordly desires never get satisfied; they can only be terminated by contentedness, detachment and renunciation). (4).

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(7.22) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 204:

Devotion and Affection for Lord Rāma's Holy Feet

Rāga Kānharā

(204)

जो मन लागै रामचरन अस ।
 देह—गेह—सुत—बित—कलत्र महुँ मगन होत बिनु जतन किये जस ।। 1 ।।
 द्वंद्वरहित, गतमान, ग्यानरत, बिषय—बिरत खटाइ नाना कस ।
 सुखनिधान सुजान कोसलपति है प्रसन्न, कहु, क्यों न होहि बस ।। 2 ।।
 सर्वभूत—हित, निर्व्यलीक चित, भगति—प्रेम दृढ़ नेम, एकरस ।
 तुलसीदास यह होइ तबहिं जब द्रवै ईस, जेहि हतो सीसदस ।। 3 ।।

(204)

jō mana lāgai rāmacarana asa.

dēha-gēha-suta-bita-kalatra maham' magana hōta binu jatana kiyē jasa. 1.
dvandvarahita, gatamāna, gyānarata, biṣaya-birata khaṭā'i nānā kasa.
sukhanidhāna sujāna kōsalapati hvai prasanna, kahu, kyōm na hōnhi basa. 2.
sarvabhūta-hita, nibryalika cita, bhagati-prēma dṛṛha nēma, ēkarasa.
tulasīdāsa yaha hō'i tabahim jaba dravai īsa, jēhi hatō sīsadasa. 3.

Verse no. 204—If this Mana (mind and heart) could get hitched to (i.e. could develop love and affection for) the lotus-like holy feet of Lord Sri Ram (*jō mana lāgai*

rāmacarana) in the same way as (asa, jasa) it is joyfully attached to and willingly indulges in (maham magana hōta), as a matter of habit and without making any special effort for it (binu jatana kiyē), the body, the household, one's son, wealth and woman (wife) (dēha-gēha-suta-bitā-kalatra)—well, then it (the Mana) can find riddance or freedom from so many countless problems that surround it from all sides (rahita).

Hence, if a person is wise enough to train his Mana to follow this wise advice, then he can be freed from so many bewildering and profound problems that vex a person's spirit and create a lot of discord, confusion and doubts in his mind (dvandvarahita). He is freed from all sense of ego, arrogance and haughtiness (gatamāna). He becomes self-realised and wise, pursuing nothing but enlightenment and Truth (gyānarata). He finds no interest in pursuing the material sense objects of the world that appear to give pleasures and comforts to deluded and less-enlightened persons, or in gratification of his sense organs, as he finds no charm in them, as a result of which he has developed the grand virtues of renunciation and dispassion within his inner-self (biṣaya-birata).

Every single charm of the material world and pride of his own body appear lack-lustre to him in the same way as the sweet dish that turns sour and bitter if it is kept in a vessel made of brass or an amalgam of copper and zinc (pkhaṭā'i nānā kasa).

Well say (kahu), why would Lord Ram, the wise and graceful Lord of Kaushal who is a treasury of bliss and happiness (sukhanidhāna sujāna kōsalapati) not become pleased and happy with such a self-realised, wise and enlightened devotee of his (hvai prasanna), and why would he not do the devotee's bidding; why would he not surrender himself before such a devoted person (kyōm na hōnhi basa)?¹ (1—2).

[¹Lord Sri Ram feels so overwhelmed with mercy, compassion, benevolence, affection and dearness for such a devotee that he becomes greatly obliged to him for showing so great faith, love and devotion for the Lord. The Lord then feels that he is morally obliged to do whatever the devotee wishes, and therefore the Lord keeps all his wishes and orders. It appears that Lord Sri Ram has begun to obey his devotee much the same way as the devotee obeys the Lord—it becomes a two-way and mutual love for each other so much so that the munificent and benignant Lord cannot ignore any of his devotee's wishes nor of his welfare. The actual fact is that the gracious nature of the Lord compels him to act as if he was subservient to his own devotees.]

A person (who has thus developed devotion and love for Lord Sri Ram's holy feet in the manner described above) becomes immaculate in character and exhibits exemplary auspicious and righteous virtues. For instance, he is sincerely and fully involved in the welfare and benefit of others (sarvabhūta-hita); his mind and sub-conscious become pious, faultless, unattached and dispassionate to everything related to this mundane gross existence (nibryalika cita); he becomes steady and robust in his devotion, love and affection for the Lord God that take firm root in his mind and heart (bhagati-prēma dr̥ṣṭa nēma); and he becomes calm, serene, balanced and quiet, treating everything and all situations with equanimity and equitability so much so that the gravest of provocations and adversities fail to excite him (ēkarasa).

Tulsidas asserts that this exalted state of being is possible only when (tulasīdāsa yaha hō'i tabahim jaba) the Lord ("īsa"; Sri Ram), who had slayed the

ten-headed demon Ravana (jēhi hatō sīsadasa)², becomes pleased with the creature and shows mercy upon him (dravai) (3).

[²By alluding to Ravana, Tulsidas means that Sri Ram can vanquish even the most formidable of enemies of the creature symbolised by such negative traits as evils vices, sins, misdeeds, perversions, selfishness, greed, anger, passions, hatred, jealousy, arrogance, haughtiness, and so many countless others that join hands to endlessly torture the helpless creature in this world.]

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(7.23) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 208:

The metaphor of the Bird-catcher

Rāga Kalyāṇa

(208)

नाथ सों कौन बिनती कहि सुनावौ ।
 त्रिबिध बिधि अमित अवलोकि अघ आपने,
 सरन सनमुख होत सकुचि सिर नावौ ॥1॥
 बिरचि हरिभगतिको बेष बर टाटिका,
 कपट—दल हरित पल्लवनि छावौ ।
 नामलगी लाइ लासा ललित—बचन कहि,
 ब्याध ज्यों बिषय—बिहँगनि बझावौ ॥2॥
 कुटिल सतकोटि मेरे रोम पर वारियहि,
 साधु गनतीमें पहलेहि गनावौ ।
 परम बर्बर खर्ब गर्व—पर्वत चढ़्यो,
 अग्य सर्बग्य, जन—मनि जनावौ ॥3॥
 साँच किधौ झूठ मोको कहत कोउ—
 कोउ राम! रावरो, हौं तुम्हरो कहावौ ।
 बिरदकी लाज करि दास तुलसिहिं देव!
 लेहु अपनाइ अब देहु जनि बावौ ॥4॥

(208)

nātha sōm kauna binatī kahi sunāvaum.
 tribidha bidhi amita avalōki agha āpanē,
 sarana sanamukha hōta sakuci sira nāvaum. 1.
 biraci haribhagatikō bēṣa bara ṭāṭikā,
 kapaṭa-dala harita pallavani chāvaum.
 nāmalagi lā'i lāsā lalita-bacana kahi,
 byādha jyōm biṣaya-bihamṅani bajhāvaum. 2.

kuṭila satakōṭi mērē rōma para vāriyahi,
 sādhu ganatīmēm pahalēhi ganāvaum̃.
 parama barbara kharba garva-parbata caṛhaīō,
 agya sarbagya, jana-mani janāvaum̃. 3.
 sām̃ca kidhauṃ jhūṭha mōkō kahata kō'u-
 kō'u rāma! rāvarō, hauṃ tumharō kahāvaum̃.
 biradakī lāja kari dāsa tulasihim̃ dēva!
 lēhu apanā'i aba dēhu jani bāvaum̃. 4.

Verse no. 208—‘Oh Lord (Ram)! How can and in what words should I pray to you? When I look at (i.e. consider) the numerous sins and mischief done by me using various means and methods (involving the three faculties by which a man acts in an unrighteous and contemptuous way—i.e. one’s mind, one’s speech or words, and one’s deeds), and then contemplate on (the possibility of) seeking refuge in your holy feet, my head bows down in shame and I feel exceedingly hesitant to come to you seeking shelter and pardon for my misbehaviour (1).

[Now, let me outline my misdeeds and pretensions of being pious before the world in order to deceive others, and you will understand the utter shame I feel in coming to face you.]

Disguised as a Lord’s devotee, I make a beautiful (i.e. misleading, deceitful, fraudulent) net (a snare, a trap), camouflage it with cunning, trickery, fraud and cheating in the shape of green leaves, mount this contraption on a long pole in the shape of your holy name, and put the sticking-gum on it in the disguise of sweet, pleasant-sounding but treacherous and false words—and I use this contraption (shaped as a tree branch) to trap the birds representing pleasures of the sense organs, the objects of the senses and the charms of material world—like a bird-catcher catches a bird.¹ (2).

[¹By this metaphor, Tulsidas means that outwardly one appears to be a saint or a pious soul—complete with a religious mark known as the ‘Tilak’ on the forehead, a rosary in hand, uttering Lord Ram’s holy name from the lips and singing the Lord’s glories aloud in a sweet voice, going around preaching others the virtues of devotion and love for the Lord God as well as other spiritual virtues such as renunciation and detachment, but all this is a mean to deceive the world to make it fall into the trap. In fact, false saints and pretentious persons practice nothing of what they say or preach, for they hanker for worldly things, are eager to gratify their sense organs, are hungry for fame and money, they run after sensual pleasures and worldly comforts, and they utter the Lord’s holy name only to feed their stomachs and not for any kind of spiritual welfare.

Applying such an evil and sinful character upon himself in order to avoid being accused of raising fingers at others and being too pretentious himself, Tulsidas says that in fact he himself is like a cruel bird-catcher who lays a beautiful trap to catch the innocent and unwary bird not only to cause the poor creature immense suffering but also to accumulate a bigger and more heavier burden of sins for himself with each passing day.

The bird-catcher lays a trap consisting of a net that is covered by leaves, and then he spreads some seeds on the ground. As soon as the poor bird comes to eat the seeds, the bird-catcher immediately lets the net fall with the help of a long pole, catching the helpless bird.

In this metaphor, the 'net' consists of the false attire and external looks of a devotee of the Lord; the 'cover of green leaves' is symbolised by deception and pretensions; the 'pole' is sweet words and singing of the glories of the Lord; and the 'bird' is the many material sense objects of the world that one covets and grabs at the first opportunity. That is to say, he preaches renunciation but lusts for material things; he preaches the Lord's holy name but his mind is hooked to the temptations of the world.]

It's such a great irony that though I am so great a sinner, a wicked rascal, a depraved, pervert and unscrupulous fellow that 100 million unrighteous and evil ones can be sacrificed as against my single body-hair (i.e. my one hair is equivalent to several million potent vices and sins, and since my body has so many uncountable hairs, my sins and wickedness are also measureless, uncountable, indescribable and immense)—but in spite of that I still try to get myself counted as being the first among saints and pious people, and claim to be the most exalted and the best among them.

Though I am very deceitful, pervert, pretentious, immodest and unashamed of my behaviour and deeds, though I am lowly, mean, wicked and unscrupulous—but I have mounted a hill of pride, arrogance, haughtiness and ego (claiming that I am most holy, pious, righteous and noble!). That is why, though being ignorant and stupid, I dare to call (declare) myself an expert, one who is wise and learned, and is the best among (the Lord's) devotees! [Well, Lord, look at my audacity—how incredibly pervert, ridiculous and wicked I am indeed.] (3).

Oh Rāvarō (an affectionate way of addressing Lord Sri Ram who is the King-Emperor and the Lord of all Lords)! I cannot tell whether it is true or false (i.e. whether it is correct or incorrect), but some people speak of me as being one of yours (they say, 'this fellow belongs to Sri Ram'; he is the Lord's devotee and servant). In fact, I too like myself that I be called so (i.e. I love being identified as one of your true devotees, and being honoured and given respect for it).

Oh Lord! Just because of this, you should now accept Tulsidas to uphold the high dignity, sanctity, the most exalted stature, the immaculate reputation, the great glories and the immense fame of yourself as well as of your holy name. [To wit, once I have been identified as being one of your devotees and servants, if I still remain wretched and wicked, sinful and vile, depraved, decadent, perverse and pervert, rejected and dejected, if I still don't find liberation and deliverance from my sins and burden of evil deeds—then just think oh Lord, how will you save your reputation, fame and good name; what will the world say? Saving me is a small price you'll have to pay to protect your own greatness and glories! A great much is at stake—so, hurry-up Lord and don't delay any further in granting me freedom from my miseries and worldly entanglements so that your glories and reputation does not get tarnished in the least due to me.] (4).

[Note :- No wonder Tulsidas has cited the example of the cunning 'Bird-catcher' in this verse—he himself is no less clever! See how he has trapped Sri Ram. First he sings Lord Ram's glories, then says about himself that he is the most wretched fellow and a sinful one, and then literally puts the Lord on notice and forces him to protect Tulsidas so as to save his own reputation! What a clever bargain indeed, and a profitable one at that!! Tulsidas invokes Lord Sri Ram's merciful, kind, munificent, compassionate and benevolent nature to fulfil his own desire for liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation.

Tulsidas has so great faith in the Lord's nature and his love for his devotees as well as acceptance of those sinful ones who come to seek the Lord's shelter that he does not fear in literally imposing himself on the Lord, knowing fully well that the gracious Lord can't and won't refuse him. How clever and crafty of Tulsidas indeed it is!]

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(7.24) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 211:

Rām, will you.....?

(211)

कबहुँ रघुबंसमनि! सो कृपा करहुगे ।
 जेहि कृपा ब्याध, गज, बिप्र, खल नर तरे,
 तिन्हहिं सम मानि मोहि नाथ उद्धरहुगे ।।1।।
 जोनि बहु जनमि किये करम खल बिबिध बिधि,
 अधम आचरन कछु हृदय नहि धरहुगे ।
 दीनहित! अजित सरबग्य समरथ प्रनतपाल
 चित मृदुल निज गुननि अनुसरहुगे ।।2।।
 मोह-मद-मान-कामादि खल-मंडली
 सकुल निरमूल करि दुसह दुख हरहुगे ।
 जोग-जप-जग्य-बिग्यान ते अधिक अति,
 अमल दृढ़ भगति दै परम सुख भरहुगे ।।3।।
 मंदजन-मौलिमनि सकल, साधन-हीन,
 कुटिल मन, मलिन जिय जानि जो डरहुगे ।
 दासतुलसी बेद-बिदित बिरुदावली
 बिमल जस नाथ! केहि भाँति बिस्तरहुगे ।।4।।

(211)

kabahuṁ raghubansamani! sō kṛpā karahugē.
 jēhi kṛpā byādha, gaja, bipra, khala nara tarē,
 tinhahiṁ sama māni mōhi nātha ud'dharahugē. 1.
 jōni bahu janami kiyē karama khala bibidha bidhi,
 adhama ācarana kachu hṛdaya nahi dharahugē.
 dīnahita! ajita sarabagya samaratha pranatapāla
 cita mṛdula nija gunani anusarahugē. 2.
 mōha-mada-māna-kāmādi khala-maṇḍalī

sakula niramūla kari dusaha dukha harahugē.
 jōga-japa-jagya-bigyāna tē adhika ati,
 amala dṛṛha bhagati dai parama sukha bharahugē. 3.
 mandajana-maulimani sakala sādhana-hīna,
 kuṭila mana, malina jiya jāni jō ḍarahugē.
 dāsatusā bēda-bidita birudāvalī
 bimala jasa nātha! kēhi bhāmṭi bistarahugē. 4.

Verse no. 211—Oh Lord Raghubansamani (Lord Sri Ram who is like a jewel in the clan of king Raghu of Ayodhya)! Will you ever show the same grace, mercy and compassion on me on the strength (potent powers and influence) of which the hunter-cum-bandit (Valmiki), Gajendra (the Elephant), the Brahmin (Ajamil) and many other wretched rascals and wicked ones had crossed the ocean-like mundane world?

Oh Lord! Will you liberate me and deliver me from my sorrows and the trap in the form of this world in which I find myself (mōhi nātha ud'dharahugē) by treating me as one of those sinners and vile ones whom you have liberated and delivered already. [Lord, please treat me as a sinner similar to the ones you have already liberated in the past, and therefore you should have no hesitation in giving me the same relief as you had given them.] (1).

By taking birth through numerous wombs (“jōni bahu janami”; i.e. in numerous forms as different types of creatures), I have indulged in doing countless wicked deeds. (jōni -----kiyē karama khala bibidha bidhi)

Will you not mind my mischief and malficence, the fact of my corrupt nature and wicked behaviour (while weighing in your heart whether to accept me and grant me emancipation and salvation)¹? (adhama ācarana kachu hṛdaya nahi dharahugē).

Oh Lord who is the graceful benefactor and well-wisher of the distressed, the downtrodden, the meek, the weak, the lowly and the wretched ones (dīnahita)! Will you live up to your reputation of being (a) invincible and so powerful that no enemy can ever subdue you (“ajita”; here meaning my enemies symbolised by my negativities and the countless vices that I have, such as passions or Kaam, anger or Krodh, attachments or Moha, greed or Lobha etc.), of being (b) aware of or knowing the thoughts of others (“sarabagya”; i.e. you must be aware about my internal evil thoughts, but at the same time of the fact that I sincerely wish to surrender before you and seek your devotion and love in my heart), of being (c) able to do everything and achieve success in all, as nothing is impossible for you (“samaratha”; i.e. it is possible for you to remove all my hurdles and cut all my fetters, and provide me with salvation, emancipation and devotion in your holy feet, and take care of my general well-being), and of being (d) committed to give protection to those who have taken refuge in your holy feet (pranatapāla), and other such countless noble and virtuous qualities—Lord, will you follow this path for which you are well known, which you have avowed to uphold consistently (because you will have to take into account your own fame and reputation while taking a decision in my matter).² (2).

[¹In verse no. 208 herein above, Tulsidas has already said that he is ashamed of his past evil deeds and sins that he had accumulated in his many previous births. But at the same time, Lord Ram is so merciful that when a distressed creature comes to him seeking refuge and merciful forgiveness, the Lord doesn't refuse him but accepts the creature gladly, for this is the Lord's nature and habit. This fact has been proclaimed by Lord Ram himself while accepting Vibhishan, the brother of the demon king Ravana of Lanka, when he had come to the Lord for acceptance as his devotee and refugee—refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, (i) Doha no. 43 along with Chaupai line nos. 1-5 that follow it; and (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-7 precede Doha no. 48.

²“Oh Lord, considering your fame and noble virtues for which you are so famed and world-renowned, will you overlook or ‘wink’ at my sins, faults, vices, shortcomings etc., read what is in my mind and heart as you are all-knowing, and accept the fact that I am sincere when I say that I have come to seek refuge in your holy feet. Lord, then you will be convinced that I am not trying to deceive you when I say I have come to surrender at your holy feet and seek your devotion and love in return. Since you are all-forgiving and merciful exceedingly, I am very sure that I will be granted what wish is in my heart: which is to have devotion and love for you, as well as to get liberation and deliverance from this trap-like mundane world. Oh Lord, by your grace, my soul will find emancipation and salvation for all times to come.

Yes oh Lord, you can do it; there isn't an iota of doubt about it. Yes, you can for sure remove the fetters that have bound and pilloried me to this world of transmigration, causing me uncountable sufferings and unsurmountable grief. It is only you who can redeem my soul!

My sins are like enemies for me, and you being an invincible Lord (*ajita*) can surely defeat them on behalf of your servant and devotee named Tulsidas.

You are all-knowing (*sarabagya*), so there is no chance I can cheat on you.

You are all-able and competent (*samaratha*), as well as the one who is morally bound to give refuge to seekers (*pranatapāla*). Therefore you can't find an excuse to refuse my petition for granting me refuge and protection from my cruel enemies and ill-fate.]

Oh gracious Lord! Will you remove the intolerable sufferings and horrible torments which I am subjected to (*dusaha dukha harahugē*) by uprooting and eliminating (“*sakula niramūla kari*”; destroying, killing, ejecting, neutralising) the hordes or groups of wicked fellows (*khala-maṇḍalī*) that have firmly entrenched themselves in my heart, and causing immense consternation and vexation for me from within my own self?

These wicked fellows are the following negative traits, vices and evil tendencies that are present in my heart: (a) worldly attractions, attachments and infatuations (*mōha*); (b) haughtiness and arrogance (*mada*); (c) hypocrisy, pride, ego and vanity (*māna*); and (d) lust, passion and desire and other such wicked characters (*kāmādi*)?

What more (or better still), will you fill my heart (i.e. the place thus vacated by these rascals from my heart) with the extreme ecstasy, exceeding joy and supreme

bliss (**parama sukha bharahugē**) by bestowing upon me the boon of having steady and unwavering devotion and affection of the purest kind for you (**amala dṛṣṭa bhagati dai**) which is more worthy, more sought after, more effective, more important and far better than (**tē adhika ati**) the boon of being successful in doing Yoga (“**jōga**”; meditation, concentration on the Lord), Japa (“**japa**”; constant recitation of Mantras), Yagya (“**jagya**”; fire and other religious sacrifices) and Vigyan (“**bigyāna**”; acquisition of knowledge and wisdom)?³ (3).

[³Put in simple words, Tulsidas prays to Lord Ram to grant him ‘Bhakti’ which means to have devotion and affection for the Lord and refuge in his holy feet rather than success in Yoga, Japa, Yagya and Vigyan. The plain and simple reason is that all these paths are difficult to follow and full of pitfalls and obstacles, while the path of Bhakti is straightforward with no encumbrances. This fact is also endorsed in Ram Charit Manas, Uttar Kand, (i) from Chaupai line no. 5 that precedes Doha no. 84—to Doha no. 85; (ii) from Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 119—to Chaupai line no. 16 that precedes Doha no. 120.]

Oh Lord, if you feel afraid, a bit hesitant and reluctant (**jāni jō dārahugē**) to give succour and refuge to Tulsidas who is a humble servant of yours (**dāsatulasī**) because he is first among the wicked, the rascals, the miscreants, the lowly and the downtrodden (**mandajana-maulimani**), one who is devoid of all resources and abilities (**sakala sādhana-hīna**), whose mind is sinful, deceitful, cunning and treacherous (**kuṭila mana**), and whose heart is dark, corrupt, evil and pervert (**malina jiya**)—well oh Lord (**nātha**), then say (or think) how will you be able to spread (**kēhi bhāmṭi bistarahugē**) your magnificent glory and establish your immaculate and grand reputation in the world (“**bimala jasa**”; as the Lord who forgives all the sins of his devotees, the Lord who purifies the sinful and gives them refuge, the Lord who never turns down anyone if he comes seeking mercy and grace, and so on) that has been extolled and proclaimed so assertively even in the Vedas (the scriptures; **bēda-bidita birudāvalī**)?⁴ (4).

[⁴Tulsidas pleads with Lord Ram to keep in mind the Lord’s own reputation while considering Tulsidas’ pleas for seeking refuge with the Lord and grant of liberation and deliverance. This is the Lord’s promise that he will go out of his way to save the lowly and the sinful if they just surrender before him sincerely with a determination not to repeat their sins again, and are honestly regretful for whatever sins they already have done. The Lord would not only accept them but would take care of their future well-being in all respects.

Therefore, Tulsidas urges Lord Ram not to delay in giving his refuge in his holy feet and grant him the boon of having devotion and affection for the Lord.]

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(7.25) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 235:

Lord Rāma is like the Cintāmaṇī Gem

(235)

ऐसेहि जनम-समूह सिराने ।
 प्राननाथ रघुनाथ-से प्रभु तजि सेवत चरन बिराने ॥1॥
 जे जड़ जीव कुटिल, कायर, खल, केवल कलिमल-साने ।
 सूखत बदन प्रसंसत तिन्ह कहँ, हरितें अधिक करि माने ॥2॥
 सुख हित कोटि उपाय निरंतर करत न पायँ पिराने ।
 सदा मलीन पंथके जल ज्यों, कबहुँ न हृदय थिराने ॥3॥
 यह दीनता दूर करिबेको अमित जतन उर आने ।
 तुलसी चित-चिंता न मिटै बिनु चिंतामनि पहिचाने ॥4॥

(235)

aisēhi janama-samūha sirānē.
 prānanātha raghunātha-sē prabhu taji sēvata carana birānē. 1.
 jē jara jīva kuṭila, kāyara, khala, kēvala kalimala-sānē.
 sūkhata badana prasansata tinha kaham̐, haritēṁ adhika kari mānē. 2.
 sukha hita kōṭi upāya nirantara karata na pāyam̐ pirānē.
 sadā malīna panthakē jala jyōm, kabahum̐ na hṛdaya thirānē. 3.
 yaha dīnatā dūra karibēkō amita jatana ura ānē.
 tulasī cita-cintā na miṭai binu cintāmani pahicānē. 4.

Verse no. 235—Alas! In this regretful way (as narrated in verse nos. 83 and 234 of this book), numerous lives (births) have been wasted by me in vain. Unfortunately during all these lives, I had abandoned such a magnanimous and benevolent Lord as Lord Raghunātha (Sri Ram), who is so exceedingly lovable and dearest to one's heart (prānanātha), and instead I had frittered away my time in endlessly serving at the feet of others (who were all driven by selfishness and had never bothered and cared for my true well-being) (1).

It is such a sorry and pitiable state of affairs for me that I had made my throat hoarse and my mouth dry by praising and extolling (sūkhata badana prasansata tinha kaham̐) all through my life all those stupid and ignorant Jivas ("jē jara jīva"; creatures) who are soaked only in the evils, faults and negativities associated with Kaliyug (kēvala kalimala-sānē) without having anything good to their credit and meritorious in their name, who are wicked and deceitful to the hilt, who are coward and treacherous to the extreme, who are rascals, cunning and unscrupulous without limit to their perversion and evilness (kuṭila, kāyara, khala).

It is such an irony (and a proof of my own stupidity and foolhardiness that I had been veciforeously praising and lauding such despicable creatures as if they were

more exalted, greater and better than the Lord God himself (haritēṁ adhika kari mānē)!¹ (2).

[¹To wit, instead of loathing such sinful and evil persons and avoiding any contact with them, I had not only liberally praised them but even raised them to an exalted level higher than the Lord God. How ignorant am I, and how deplorable is my state of mind!]

Alas, it is so sad that my legs never felt tired and ached (na pāyam̐ pirānē) while endlessly pursuing countless paths and trying various methods in order to derive happiness and comfort from the gross sense objects of this mundane world (sukha hita kōṭi upāya nirantara karata).

The condition of my heart had always been so unclean and abhorable like the filthy puddle of murky water found on a dusty road (sadā malīna panthakē jala jyōm̐); it had never found stability, purity and cleanliness (kabahum̐ na hṛdaya thirānē)² (3).

[²In stanza no. 2 the deplorable condition of the mind is described, and of the heart in this stanza no. 3. These two components, viz. the mind and the heart, form the subtle body of the creature who is controlled from within his own self by these two entities. The creature's external gross body is driven by the instructions issued by his internal subtle body. This is why Tulsidas finds fault with the mind and the heart instead of the gross body.]

I thought over this problem and contemplated upon numerous ways and means to remove this wretched, miserable and stupid state of affairs that I find myself in (yaha dīnatā dūra karibēkō amita jatana ura ānē), but oh Tulsidas, the worries and consternations that have agitated you and upset your mind and heart cannot be eliminated (cita-cintā na miṭai) without recognising that there is a wonderful gem known as 'Chintamani' ("binu cintāmani pahicānē"—because this is a single 'charm' that can act as a miracle-panacea for all your worries and fears that have so much confounded you)³ (4).

[³The word 'Chintamani' means a gem that removes all worries and grief.

Tulsidas advises that once we realise that Lord Ram and his holy name is the one-stop solution for all our spiritual and worldly problems, then there would be no scope for fear and confusions any more. The problem lasts only till the time a creature does not recognise this fact.

In the context of what has been said in stanza nos. 1-3, this last stanza implies that all the problems that a creature faces in his life have their genesis in the creature's stupidity inasmuch as he had spent his life in serving and pleasing so many lords and masters, including of course the many gods and other deities that he worshipped and made offerings to, instead of having love and devotion for Lord Ram, for had he done so the Lord would have taken upon himself to look after the creature's well-being and happiness as well as his liberation and deliverance from the cycle of transmigration.

Verily, if a traveller has to pass through a place full of wicked people as characterised in this verse, and he is so sore affright of them that he thinks it best to keep them in good humour by offering his obeisance to them so that they don't bother him unnecessarily in the passage through this thug-country, then Lord Ram is his true friend and guide who will accompany him and take him safely across without letting these cruel inhabitants of the place harming him.

When a traveller passes through a dense forest said to be infested with ghosts and wild spirits, he keeps on muttering some holy charm so that his passage is made safe. Likewise, a wise person would invoke Lord Ram while journeying through the wild forest-like world infested with wicked and treacherous people.

A lonely man feels scared and utterly frightened in a dark forest inhabited by wild beasts. But with a torch in hand and an expert hunter to protect and guide him, his confidence gets a boost and he traverses the jungle path fearlessly. Here, the torch is symbolic of Lord Sri Ram's holy name, and the expert hunter stands for the protective shield that the Lord offers himself.]

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(7.26) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 242:

Tulasīdāsa' humble self vis-à-vis the exalted stature of Lord Śrī Rāma

(242)

तुमसम दीनबंधु, न दीन कोउ मोसम, सुनहु नृपति रघुराई ।
 मोसम कुटिल-मौलिमनि नहिं जग, तुमसम हरि! न हरन कुटिलाई ॥1॥
 हौं मन-बचन-करम पातक-रत, तुम कृपालु पतितन-गतिदाई ।
 हौं अनाथ, प्रभु! तुम अनाथ-हित, चित यहि सुरति कबहुँ नहिं जाई ॥2॥
 हौं आरत, आरति-नासक तुम, कीरति निगम-पुराननि गाई ।
 हौं सभीत तुम हरन सकल भय, कारन कवन कृपा बिसराई ॥3॥
 तुम सुखधाम राम श्रम-भंजन, हौं अति दुखित त्रिबिध श्रम पाई ।
 यह जिय जानि दास तुलसी कहँ राखहु सरन समुझि प्रभुताई ॥4॥

(242)

tumasama dīnabandhu, na dīna kō'u mōsama, sunahu nr̥pati raghurā'ī.
 mōsama kuṭila-maulimani nahim̐ jaga, tumasama hari! na harana kuṭilā'ī. 1.
 haum̐ mana-bacana-karama pātaka-rata, tuma kṛpālu patitana-gatidā'ī.
 haum̐ anātha, prabhu! tuma anātha-hita, cita yahi surati kabahum̐ nahim̐ jā'ī. 2.
 haum̐ ārata, ārati-nāsaka tuma, kīrati nigama-purānani gā'ī.
 haum̐ sabhīta tuma harana sakala bhaya, kārana kavana kṛpā bisarā'ī. 3.
 tuma sukhadhāma rāma śrama-bhañjana, haum̐ ati dukhita tribidha śrama pā'ī.
 yaha jiya jāni dāsa tulasī kaham̐ rākhahu sarana samujhi prabhutā'ī. 4.

Verse no. 242—Listen oh King of kings, Lord Raghupati (Sri Ram; “sunahu nr̥pati raghurā'ī”)! On the one hand there is no one else except you who is a better friend and a better well-wisher of those who are meek, weak, humble and distressed

(tumasama dīnabandhu), and on the other hand there is no one more meek, weak, humble and distressed than me (na dīna kō'u mōsama).

Indeed in all sooth there is superior to me in being wicked and evil in mind and heart this world (mōsama kuṭīla-maulimani nahim̐ jaga), and likewise there is no one oh Lord who is comparable to you as being a destroyer of such evil traits (tumasama hari! na harana kuṭīlā'ī).¹ (1).

[¹To wit, oh Lord, I perfectly fit the bill and am fully eligible to get your attention in this matter, for I am highly wicked, very evil and overwhelmed with sins in this world, and you are the one who is renowned to provide freedom from all such negativities. So now you must accept me for this very reason that you have to purify me and purge all the negativities and remove all impurities that have so far overwhelmed me—for otherwise your immaculate reputation would take a beating and get tarnished.]

I am engrossed and indulgent in sins, vices and evil deeds by using my mind, with my speech and words, and in my deeds and actions (hauṁ mana-bacana-karama pātaka-rata), and oh merciful and gracious Lord (kṛpālu), you are the one who provides the supreme state of purification (i.e. emancipation and salvation to the soul of) sinners, those who are evil and vile (tuma patitana-gatidā'ī).

I am a desolate, lonely and a destitute person (hauṁ anātha), and oh Lord, you are the benefactor of such people (prabhu tuma anātha-hita).

I just cannot get rid of (i.e. drive away, forget, remove, erase) this fact from my heart and mind (cita yahi surati kabahum̐ nahim̐ jā'ī). [And this is why I keep on insisting you to help me and accept me as one of your humble servant, follower and devotee—for I know that you love such distressed souls and have extreme compassion and love for them in your magnanimous heart. So how can you not accept me or neglect me by any measure?] (2).

I am miserable, distressed, sorrowful and unhappy (hauṁ ārata), while you are the one who removes them (ārati-nāsaka tuma).

The Vedas and Purans sing (decare loudly, proclaim) this glory and fame of yours (kīrati nigama-purānani gā'ī). [To wit, I am not saying anything cooked up by me because I am suffering, but this fact about your magnanimous nature and benevolent temperament is proclaimed by the ancient scriptures too.]

I am scared of this world (“hauṁ sabhīta”; consisting of the cycle of birth and death, and its accompanying horrors), and you are the destroyer of all fears (tuma harana sakala bhaya).

[So therefore, inspite of so many ways in which we are both related to each other—] What is the reason that you don't show your mercy, benevolence, kindness and grace upon me (kārana kavana kṛpā bisarā'ī)? [To wit, oh Lord, you must be kind to me, for this is in your nature to be kind to those who are sorrowful and distressed, if they come to you begging for mercy and forgiveness which I am doing.] (3).

Oh Lord Sri Ram! You are an abode of bliss (tuma sukhadhāma rāma) and are the eliminator of weariness (i.e. agitations, frustrations, miseries etc.) that torment a creature in his life in this world (śrama-bhañjana), while I am extremely sorrowful and miserable (“hauṁ ati dukhīta”; i.e. am agitated, frustrated and weary), tired of

the constant misery caused to me by the three agitations or turbulences of the world (tribidha śrama pāṭi)².

[²The 3 agitations of the world which create misery and weariness are Daihik = related to physical body such as disease, old age etc.; Daivic = related to Gods, demi-gods, malignant stars creating so many unforeseen and beyond control hurdles and problems; Bhautik = related to terrestrial world e.g. rivers, mountains, fires, floods, famine, droughts etc.; also due to family, kins, relations, enemies as well as reptiles such as serpents, animals etc.]

Considering all these facts and aspects in your heart, and realising your own fame, glory and honour, you should surely keep Tulsidas (yaha jiya jāni dāsa tulasī kaham̐) in your shelter and give him refuge in your holy feet (rākhahu sarana samujhi prabhutāṭi) (4).

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(7.27) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 254:

Lord Śrī Rāma's Holy Name

(254)

राम! रावरो नाम मेरो मातु-पितु है।
 सुजन-सनेही, गुरु-साहिब, सखा-सुहृद,
 राम-नाम प्रेम-पन अबिचल बितु है॥1॥
 सतकोटि चरित अपार दधिनिधि मथि
 लियो काढ़ि बामदेव नाम-घृतु है।
 नामको भरोसो-बल चारिहू फलको फल,
 सुमिरिये छाड़ि छल, भलो कृतु है॥2॥
 स्वारथ-साधक, परमारथ-दायक नाम,
 राम-नाम सारिखो न और हितु है।
 तुलसी सुभाव कही, साँचिये परैगी सही,
 सीतानाथ-नाम नित चितहू को चितु है॥3॥

(254)

rāma! rāvarō nāma mērō mātu-pitu hai.
 sujana-sanēhī, guru-sāhiba, sakhā-suhr̥da,
 rāma-nāma prēma-pana abicala bitu hai. 1.
 satakōṭi carita apāra dadhinidhi mathi
 liyō kāḍhi bāmadēva nāma-ghṛtu hai.
 nāmakō bharōsō-bala cārihū phalakō phala,
 sumiriyē chāḍi chala, bhalō kṛtu hai. 2.

svāratha-sādhaka, paramāratha-dāyaka nāma,
rāma-nāma sārīkhō na aura hitu hai.
tulasī subhāva kahī, sām̐ciyē paraigī sahī,
sītānātha-nāma nita citahū kō citu hai. 3.

Verse no. 254—Oh Lord Sri Ram! (rāma!) Your Majesty's (rāvarō) holy name is my only parent (father and mother—nāma mērō mātu-pitu hai), my only kith, kin and other dear relations (sujana-sanēhī), my only revered teacher (Guru—guru), my master and lord (sāhiba), my friend and companion (sakhā), and my selfless well-wisher and benefactor (suhṛda).

I say in all sooth and without any gainsay that the eternal and abiding affection, love and devotion that I have in your holy name, and to which I am wholeheartedly committed (rāma-nāma prēma-pana), is my only lasting wealth and sustainable treasure (abicala bitu hai) (that cannot be robbed from me!) (1).

The fact is that Lord Shiva had churned the curd-like ocean of measureless dimensions consisting of 100 Crores (i.e. hundreds of thousands) of your (Sri Ram's) divine stories that describe your countless virtuous acts, your excellent fame and glories (satakōṭi carita apāra dadhinidhi mathi), and as a fruit of this churning he had extracted clarified butter in the form of 'Ram's Holy Name' (liyō kāḍhi bāmadēva nāma-ghṛtu hai)¹.

The strength and support (both mental and emotional; both temporal and spiritual) that Lord Ram's holy name gives to a creature are astounding, and the Lord's holy name is exceedingly powerful and robust in every respect (nāmakō bharōsō-bala).

To wit, relying on Lord Ram's holy name and deriving support and strength from it is the best spiritual effort a creature can make, for it is the best thing to rely upon for one's own good. Verily, it is like a single best fruit that is borne on a tree consisting of the other four noble rewards that one usually gets by being righteous and doing meritorious deeds in life (cārihū phalakō phala)².

Therefore, one should constantly remember it (Sri Ram's holy name) with honesty and dedication after discarding all types of deceit, crookedness, pretensions, cunning, trickery and deception (sumiriyē chāḍi chala)³. [This is because the Lord does not like trickery and crookedness in his devotee's heart. If the devotee is not sincere and then he pretends to chant the holy name of Lord Ram, no benefit would accrue to him, and when he suffers in spite of saying the Lord's holy name he would blame the Lord instead of acknowledging his own fault.]

This is the best spiritual effort or exercise that a person can undertake (bhalō kṛtu hai) for his own welfare (2).

[¹There are countless instances in the epic Book known as "Ram Charit Manas" written by Goswami Tulsidas where the importance and glory of Lord Ram's holy name and his divine story are highlighted. Some of these instances are the following:-- (a) Baal Kand, (i) Chaupai line no. 1 that precedes Doha no. 19—to Chaupai line nos. 1 that precedes Doha no. 28; (ii) Chaupai line nos. 1-14 that precede Doha no. 32; (iii) Chaupai line no. 2 that precedes Doha no. 46; (b) Uttar Kand, (iv) Doha no. 124 ka; (v) Doha no. 126; (vi) Chaupai line nos. 1-6 that precede Doha no. 129.

²The four traditional great rewards for being righteous and doing meritorious deeds in life are the following—(a) 'Artha' (prosperity and material well-being),

‘Dharma’ (acquisition of fame for being the virtues of righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct etc.), ‘Kaam’ (fulfilment of all desires), and ‘Moksha’ (emancipation, salvation and one-ness with the supreme Lord).

³Refer: Ram Charit Manas, Sundar Kand, Chaupai line nos. 4-5 that precede Doha no. 44.]

[In Gita, Lord Krishna had declared that consistency and perseverance with remembering and constant chanting of the Lord's holy name is yet another form of manifestation of the Lord himself—Gita 10/25.]

Oh Lord, your name can help achieve all worldly desires (“svāratha-sādhaka”; i.e. help serve self-interest related to existence in this gross material world) as well as bestow emancipation and salvation (paramāratha-dāyaka). [To wit, the Lord’s holy name takes care of both the temporal and the spiritual welfare of the creature.]

Forsooth and without gainsay indeed, there is nothing more beneficial, more considerate, more favourably inclined and more gracious towards a creature and his well-being than Lord Sri Ram's holy name (rāma-nāma sārīkhō na aura hitu hai).

Tulsidas makes this truthful statement about Lord Ram’s nature and temperament (tulasī subhāva kahī) after verifying its authenticity, and establishing its veracity and effectiveness based on his own experience (sāṁcīyē paraigī sahī). [To wit, he makes this assertion boldly, authoritatively, honestly and truthfully (as a matter of fact, without any deceit, pretension and deception, or any kind of vested interest in saying so, as it his personal experience and he can vouch for its authenticity and truth.)]

The holy name of Sita's Lord Sri Ram (sītānātha-nāma) should be the real focus of concentration of one’s mind and sub-conscious (nita citahū kō citu hai)⁴. (3).

[⁴When the mind and the sub-conscious are under the proper and wise control of the driver in the form of Sri Ram's holy name, there will be no chance of their going astray and move about like an aimless vagrant—colliding with so many bitter feelings and sorrowful experiences, and ending weary with frustration, disillusionment, disgust and agitation. Sri Ram's holy name, at the driver's seat, will judiciously, expertly and efficiently manoeuvre the vehicle towards its destination—and it is to give peace, tranquility, supreme bliss, contentedness, equanimity, equitability, uniformity, stability, forbearance etc. to the creature.] (3).

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(7.28) Goswami Tulsidas' Book of Prayers, 'Vinai Patrika', verse no. 269:

How much love should I have for Lord Rāma

(269)

राम कबहुँ प्रिय लागिहौ जैसे नीर मीनको?
 सुख जीवन ज्यों जीवको, मनि ज्यों फनिको हित, ज्यों धन लोभ-लीनको।।1।।
 ज्यों सुभाय प्रिय लगति नागरी नागर नवीनको।
 त्यों मेरे मन लालसा करिये करुनाकर! पावन प्रेम पीनको।।2।।
 मनसाको दाता कहैं श्रुति प्रभु प्रवीनको।
 तुलसिदास को भावतो, बलि जाउँ दयानिधि! दीजै दान दीनको।।3।।

(269)

rāma kabahum̐ priya lāghau jaisē nīra mīnakō?
 sukha jīvana jyōm̐ jīvakō, mani jyōm̐ phanikō hita, jyōm̐ dhana lōbha-līnakō.

1.

jyōm̐ subhāya priya lagati nāgarī nāgara navīnakō.
 tyōm̐ mērē mana lālasā kariyē karunākara! pāvana prēma pīnakō. 2.
 manasākō dātā kahaim̐ śruti prabhu pravīnakō.
 tulasidāsa kō bhāvatō, bali jā'um̐ dayānidhi! dījai dāna dīnakō. 3.

Verse no. 269—Oh Lord Sri Ram! Will I ever have as much affection, love and endearment for you (a) as the fish has for the water (“kabahum̐ priya lāghau jaisē nīra mīnakō”; the fish cannot survive detached from the water), (b) as the creature loves a life of comfort and happiness (“sukha jīvana jyōm̐ jīvakō”; the creature tries all dirty tricks to get comfort and happiness in life), (c) as the serpent loves the ‘Mani’ (“mani jyōm̐ phanikō hita”; the Mani is a luminiscent sac formed by secretions from the glands on the hood of a special type of snake; if the sac is removed it is said that the snake dies), and (d) as a great greedy miser loves his wealth (“jyōm̐ dhana lōbha-līnakō”; for a miser, everything else in the world is secondary as compared to his pennies). (1).

Or else, even as a young actor is naturally attracted towards a young, clever and beautiful actress (jyōm̐ subhāya priya lagati nāgarī nāgara navīnakō), oh Lord who shows mercy and compassion (karunākara), please produce (or develop) in my mind and heart (i.e. my inner-self) an intense desire (tyōm̐ mērē mana lālasā kariyē) for drinking the nectar symbolised by having exclusive love and devotion for you that is of the purest kind, that is intense, truthful, steady, abiding and eternal by its inherent nature (pāvana prēma pīnakō). [Oh Lord, let it be so that I love and have affection for no one else except you; let me be devoted to you and no one else.] (2).

The Vedas assert (kahaim̐ śruti) that the Lord fulfills all the wishes and desires (that arise in the heart of his devotees and those who come to him seeking something—“manasākō dātā”), and that the Lord is very clever and proficient towards that end

(prabhu pravīnakō). [That is, the Lord understands one's needs and desires even without speaking or asking for them specifically. So the Lord fulfills them on his own by merely approaching the Lord and submitting one's self before the Lord.]

Oh an abode of mercy, compassion, kindness and grace (dayānidhi)! I earnestly beseech you, I sincerely plead before you (bali jā'um̐) to give as alms the things which Tulsidas wishes in his heart (tulasidāsa kō bhāvatō, dījai dāna dīnakō). [And, what does he want? In brief, Tulsidas wants nothing else but to have everlasting love and devotion for Lord Ram and faith in the Lord's holy name.] (4).

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About the Author

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia left home when he was approximately 29 years of age due to an inner call of his heart that told him to devote his life in the service of his beloved Lord God, Sri Ram. Worldly attractions did not enchant him at all. So, he didn't marry, and after his father's death he came and settled permanently in Ayodhya, the holy town in India associated with Lord Ram.

Presently he works as an honorary manager of a world famous Kanak Bhavan Temple at Ayodhya, and spends his time writing in English so that the world can access the wonderful nectar of metaphysical, spiritual and devotional philosophy that is contained in Indian scriptures for which they are so renowned.

His English Books published separately by a reputed publisher of India, the details of whom can be had by contacting the author on his email given below, include: (i) The series on '108 Upanishads' in five volumes having eighteen parts, (ii) Veda Vyas' 'Adhyatma Ramayan' in two parts, (iii) 'Devi Puran Ramayan', (iv) Valmiki's 'Adbhut Ramayan', and (v) 'Biography of Lord Ram' based on Tulsidas' books.

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The author's Books are available for order online both in 'e-book' format and 'paper-back book' format at following websites—

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(A) List of Books that are currently available as mentioned above :-

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Devotion for God and the Principles of Love for the Lord according to the illustrious sage Shandilya; (21) “Bhakti Sutra Mala”—A Garland of Spiritual Wisdom in the form of an Anthology of Aphorisms pertaining to Bhakti or devotion, love and affection for Lord God; (22) Glory of Lord Ram’s Holy Name, Sacred Mantras, Stotras & Hymns; (23) Saints and Non-Saints: Their Distinguishing Characters and Qualities; (24) A True Guru (Qualities, Importance and Need of a True Teacher, Preceptor, Guide and Advisor); (25) “Sundar Kand” of Ram Charit Manas; (26) The Story of Ravana and the Epic War of Lanka—Told in Slow Motion (based on, and will have the full relevant Text of, Ram Charit Manas, Adhyatma Ramayan, Anand Ramayan, Geetawali Ramayan, and Kavitawali Ramayan); (27) The Great Ancient Sages, Seers, Saints and Enlightened Kings of India; (28) The Metaphor of the Hansa in the Upanishads: The symbolism of a Grand Swan used to explain the wisdom of spiritual and metaphysical principles by the Upanishads.

(A-2) Goswami Tulsidas Series: (1) ‘Dohawali’; (2) ‘Parvati Mangal’; (3) ‘Kavitawali’; (4) ‘Janki Mangal’; (5) ‘Ram Lala Nahachu’; (6) ‘Geetawali Ramayan’; (7) ‘Vairagya Sandipani’; (8) ‘Vinai Patrika’; (9) ‘Barvai Ramayan’.

(A-3) A full-blown English rendering of Tulsidas’ epic ‘Ram Charit Manas’, otherwise also known as the “Ramayana” according to Goswami Tulsidas. My English version of this Book is comprehensive and an elaborate one, as it runs into many thousands of pages that endeavour to explain each single verse of the Book ‘Ram Charit Manas’ in fine detail from different perspectives, with the aid of explanatory notes and references.

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3. English rendering of Adhyatma Ramayan by sage Veda Vyas.

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